

# IOWA BIRD LIFE

IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION



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*The Iowa Ornithologists' Union, founded in 1923, encourages interest in the identification, study, and protection of birds in Iowa and seeks to unite those who have these interests in common. Iowa Bird Life and IOU News are quarterly publications of the Union.*

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# Phenology of Shorebird Migration in Iowa

Matthew C. Kenne

## INTRODUCTION

Over thirty species of shorebirds rely on Iowa's wetlands for resting and refueling on their yearly migratory journeys (Kent and Dinsmore 1996). The dynamic nature of water levels in wetland habitats means that shorebird use of a particular area can vary dramatically from season to season and year to year. Unfortunately, although populations of several species of shorebirds are believed to be declining (Howe et al. 1989; Morrison et al. 1994), Iowa's few remaining wetlands aren't surveyed for shorebird use by their controlling agencies or managed specifically for the needs of migratory shorebirds. Although experimental draw-downs of pools at Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) have been successful in the past in attracting and supporting migrant shorebirds (M. Kenne, pers. obs.), prime shorebird habitat in Iowa is still only a by-product of management for waterfowl production and hunting and the vagaries of weather. Like shorebirds themselves, birders attempting to observe them are challenged to find locations with the best water levels and food resources. Their resulting observations carry an added weight of importance because the field reports submitted to *Iowa Bird Life*, along with a few counts conducted by volunteers of the International Shorebird Survey, are currently the only information being recorded on migrant shorebirds in Iowa. This situation will change as managers of many wetland areas in Iowa shift toward more "migratory bird" policies and away from the focused "waterfowl" stance of past practices (Doug Harr, Iowa Department of Natural Resources [DNR], pers com.).

An important first step in finding shorebirds for fun, or planning for their conservation as a group or on an individual species basis, is accurate knowledge of the migration timing of each species. Recently published information on shorebird migration timing in Iowa generally falls into two categories, both of which have shortcomings as tools for finding shorebirds or management planning: seasonal abundance labels (such as those found on National Wildlife Refuge checklists), which are imprecise even when partly based on specific observations; and record early and late migration dates, which are better for indicating the limits of a particular shorebird species' absence from the state than for suggesting its presence. Record early or late birds are the rarest individuals of each species in a season and are not representative of the main migration.

The purposes of this review are to better define the migration period in which each transient shorebird species can be expected to be present in Iowa, to give an indication of each species' expected seasonal migration peaks by examining recent observations, and to discuss select migration timing features of individual species. Hopefully this information will help birders in their search for these exciting creatures, both for their enjoyment and for the assistance their observations can give in shaping future shorebird conservation efforts in Iowa. Iowa birders with further interest in shorebirds are encouraged to gather data as citizen-scientists for the International Shorebird Survey at the website <[www.shorebirdworld.org](http://www.shorebirdworld.org)> where their efforts can have direct bearing on shorebird conservation efforts across the Western Hemisphere.

## METHODS

Fifteen years of Field Reports in *Iowa Bird Life* (IBL 59(2)–74(2) [1989–2003]) were searched for each season's earliest and latest reported date for transient shorebird species of Regular or Casual occurrence, and for the highest seasonal count of each Regular species. Iowa censuses submitted to the International Shorebird Survey from 1989–1992 were also reviewed. Species that nest and/or winter in Iowa (Piping Plover, Killdeer, Upland and Spotted Sandpiper, and Wilson's Snipe) were excluded; but Wilson's Phalarope, a rare nester in northern Iowa, was included with the transient group because its occurrence data more closely resemble that of a transient than a breeding bird. Median dates for the beginning and end of each migration season were determined for each species using as many of the 15 possible years of data as were available. Thus, four median dates were established for each species: spring arrival and departure (Figure 1), and fall arrival and departure (Figure 2). The median date is the middle date in the series, e.g., half of the spring arrivals occur before the median date, and half after. This provides a more reasonable measure of when each species should be present in Iowa by eliminating the rare early or late individuals.

Species	March	April	May	June
Lesser Yellowlegs	18th			2nd
Pectoral Sandpiper	20th			10th
Greater Yellowlegs	22nd			28th
American Golden-Plover	26th			20th
Baird's Sandpiper	2nd			23rd
Least Sandpiper	3rd			2nd
Long-billed Dowitcher		13th		11th
Marbled Godwit		13th		20th
Dunlin		13th		2nd
American Avocet		14th		26th
Hudsonian Godwit		19th		26th
Semipalmated Plover		19th		4th
Solitary Sandpiper		20th		22nd
Willet		20th		25th
Wilson's Phalarope		22nd		
Semipalmated Sandpiper		28th		8th
Black-necked Stilt		27th		19th
Western Sandpiper		2nd		20th
White-rumped Sandpiper		2nd		14th
Short-billed Dowitcher		4th		23rd
Sanderling		5th		31st
Stilt Sandpiper		6th		26th
Black-bellied Plover		6th		28th
Buff-breasted Sandpiper		11th		23rd
Ruddy Turnstone		11th		29th
Red-necked Phalarope		12th		28th
Whimbrel			17th	27th

Figure 1. Median spring arrival and departure dates of transient shorebirds in Iowa beginning in March and continuing through June.

## RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

One aspect of migration phenology that was not readily apparent in the Iowa record was that of differential timing between adults and juveniles in fall. A pattern of two fall migration peaks is noticeable in many shorebird species because the adults migrate south several weeks before their juveniles are ready. There are very few observational data that indicate the age of shorebirds reported in Iowa except for some dowitcher identifications and in the documentations of late birds. Any statements in this paper about "adult" vs. "juvenile" migration in Iowa are assumptions based on my own experiences in conjunction with other states' findings (e.g., Paulson 1993), and not necessarily based on actual aging by plumage in the original observations. It is hoped these assumptions, along with the rest of the data (Table 1), will be refined by future observations and research.

According to these median dates (Figures 1 and 2), the spring shorebird procession in Iowa begins with four species and normally occurs before the end of March. Six species make their initial appearance during the first half of April and seven additional species arrive during the second half, with the final 10 arrivals waiting until May. Although eight migrant species regularly linger into June, White-rumped Sandpiper is the only one that

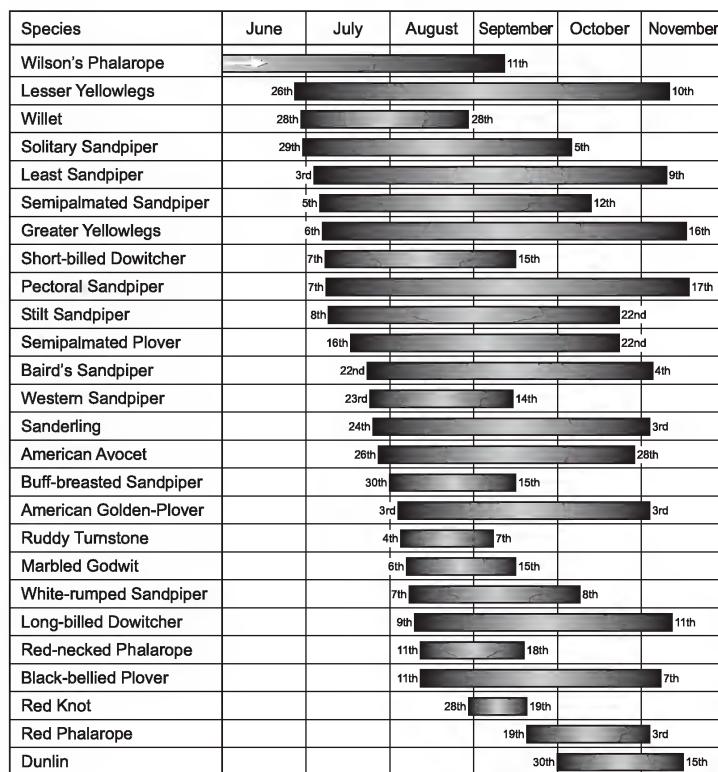


Figure 2. Median fall arrival and departure dates of transient shorebirds in Iowa beginning in June and continuing through November.

arrives in May, and it has the earliest arrival of the May species. Most of the shorebirds nesting at the highest latitudes, e.g., White-rumped Sandpiper, Sanderling, Black-bellied Plover, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, and Ruddy Turnstone, usually pass through Iowa latest in May while nesting areas may still be snow-covered, and then return in August or beyond. They seem to be so conditioned for a late, quick passage north that they do not linger into June like many of the earlier species (seven of 17 March and April arrivals). This pattern matches that which was recently shown for summer shorebird migration in Minnesota (Bardon 2002). Not surprisingly, some of the earliest March and April arrivals, e.g., Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and Least and Pectoral Sandpipers, are returning from the breeding grounds by late June or early July, having nested earlier and/or closer to Iowa.

The peak number of spring species occurs from 6 May, with the arrivals of Stilt Sandpiper and Black-bellied Plover, until the departure of Solitary Sandpiper 22 May, during which time 23–25 shorebird species can be present. This window includes most of the peak spring migration in Iowa, although from a volume standpoint, substantial numbers of Baird's and Pectoral Sandpipers, Wilson's Phalaropes, American Avocets, Lesser Yellowlegs, and Long-billed Dowitchers can also be found beginning in mid-April.

Fall migration, with its staggering of adults and juveniles, is a more protracted affair than spring: three migrant species usually arrive in late June, 12 new shorebirds begin showing up in July, and early August has seven new arrivals. Red Knot arrives late in August, at the same time as Willet makes the first departure. Eight departures occur in September (including Red Knot) before the occasional Red Phalarope shows up, which is then followed by the influx of Dunlin at the end of the month. Interestingly, of the 11 of 26 fall migrants that linger into November, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and Least and Pectoral Sandpipers were noted above as among the earliest fall returnees.

The peak number of fall species occurs from 9 August, when Long-billed Dowitcher arrives, until 15 September, when Short-billed Dowitcher, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, and Marbled Godwit depart, with 20–24 species visiting Iowa during that time. While it is difficult to generalize about the long and varied fall season, twin peaks of shorebird numbers seem to straddle this migration window: a late July–early August gathering of returning adults, followed by a late September–early October buildup of juveniles.

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709 N. Phillips, Algona, IA 50511-1747 (mkenne@metamumail.com)

**Table 1. Shorebird species accounts listing median spring and fall arrival and departure dates and dates of the highest spring and fall counts, 1989–2003<sup>a</sup>**

Species	Median spring arrival–departure		Median fall arrival–departure	
<b>BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER</b> <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	6 May (14 <sup>b</sup> )–28 May (13)		11 Aug (15)–7 Nov (14)	
No.	Date	County	No.	Date
32	19 May 1994	Polk	110	11 Oct 1989
32	19 May 1996	Marion	42	23 Oct 1998
28	25 May 1993	Story	40	3 Aug 1994
28	19 May 1995	Sac	20	12 Sep 1999

Black-bellied Plover's spring peak is concentrated in the last two weeks of May, only two weeks after the median first arrival. The October peak is comprised of juvenile birds.

**Table 1. continued**

**AMERICAN GOLDEN-PLOVER** 26 Mar (15)–20 Jun (14)                    3 Aug (14)–3 Nov (14)  
*Pluvialis dominica*

No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
1,170	4 May 1990	Wright	700	7 Oct 1990	Wright
1,140	2 May 2000	Dickinson	490	12 Oct 1989	Polk
786	14 May 1993	Story	147	3 Oct 1997	Hardin
700	19 May 1998	Dickinson	126	20 Sep 1998	Polk

American Golden-Plover has the widest spring migration window of any of our shorebirds. The first birds usually arrive in basic plumage or with some noticeable early pre-alternate molt. By the early to mid-May peak, molt into breeding plumage is complete in most individuals and the remaining variation is due to sexual dimorphism in breeding plumage (Johnson and Connors 1996). Individuals regularly linger into June (11 of 14 years); and while they are usually described as being in “basic” plumage, they are most likely one-year-old birds in a dull 1st alternate plumage (Oscar Johnson, pers. comm.). Golden-Plovers returning after mid-July (only 6 of 14 years), along with the regular early August birds, are adults molting out of breeding plumage. Unlike spring, most adults migrate away from Iowa in the fall, flying out over the Atlantic Ocean to South America, but numbers of juveniles later pass through the center of the continent.

**SEMIPALMATED PLOVER** 19 Apr (15)–4 Jun (12)                    16 Jul (14)–22 Oct (14)  
*Charadrius semipalmatus*

No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
150	14 May 1992	Marion	101	5 Aug 2002	Marion
127	7 May 2002	Winnebago	97	9 Aug 1997	Marion
100	5 May 2003	Johnson	64	6 Aug 1989	Kossuth
80	21 May 1994	Worth	37	2 Sep 2003	Marion

Unlike *Pluvialis* plovers, returning fall adult Semipalmated Plovers are more numerous than juveniles.

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** 27 Apr (7)–19 May (5)                    —  
*Himantopus himantopus*

Black-necked Stilt has changed from Accidental status at the beginning of the review period, to Casual occurrence, and recently to Regular recognition. This is the result of an actual expansion of nesting range, so migration peaks and fall median dates might be discernable if observations continue to increase. There were a record number of stilts found in Iowa in the spring of 2004, with a late bird in June.

**AMERICAN AVOCET** 14 Apr (14)–26 May (13)                    26 Jul (14)–28 Oct (14)  
*Recurvirostra americana*

No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
99	26 Apr 1998	Fremont	82	20 Oct 1994	Polk
40	18 Apr 1989	Pottawattamie	38	13 Oct 1995	Polk
30	24 Apr 1992	Pottawattamie	37	30 Sep 2003	Polk
28	22 Apr 2000	Appanoose	22	20 Oct 1998	Polk

The American Avocet spring peak is a rush beginning one week after the median first arrival. With nesting to our west, it's not surprising that spring birds show a preference for western Iowa, but it is curious that late fall flocks seek out the large waters of Saylorville Reservoir.

**Table I. continued**

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**GREATER YELLOWLEGS**      22 Mar (13)–28 May (11)      6 Jul (15)–16 Nov (15)

*Tringa melanoleuca*

No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
100	18 Apr 1996	Kossuth	176	29 Oct 1989	Marion
56	4 May 1991	Kossuth	50	4 Nov 1990	Johnson
51	6 May 2002	Marion	50	7 Aug 1993	Fremont
30	30 May 2002	Dickinson	40	4 Aug 1991	Kossuth

The fall counts indicate both the peak of returning adult Greater Yellowlegs and later juveniles.

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**LESSER YELLOWLEGS**      18 Mar (15)–2 Jun (9)      26 Jun (15)–10 Nov (13)

*Tringa flavipes*

No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
2,000	6 May 2003	Johnson	2,000	28 Jul–6 Aug 1989	Kossuth
850	7 May 2002	Winnebago	1,200	4 Aug 1991	Kossuth
800	29 Apr 1989	Fremont	400	1 Aug 1994	Kossuth
600	18 Apr 1996	Kossuth	300	17 Jul 2001	Kossuth

Returning fall adult Lesser Yellowlegs seem to be far more numerous than later juveniles.

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**SOLITARY SANDPIPER**      20 Apr (10)–22 May (7)      29 Jun (14)–5 Oct (13)

*Tringa solitaria*

No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
66	29 Apr 1989	Fremont	202	20 Jul 1991	Johnson
19	6 May 2002	Marion	100	8–30 Jul 1989	Marion
			29	24 Jul 1994	Louisa

Returning fall adult Solitary Sandpipers are sometimes found in loose groups, while later juvenile birds are rather solitary.

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**WILLET**      20 Apr (14)–25 May (12)      28 Jun (14)–28 Aug (13)

*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*

No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
41	29 Apr 2001	Clay	28	2 Jul 2001	Polk
37	29 Apr 1990	Guthrie	20	22 Jun 1998	Appanoose
35	1 May 1991	Story	9	29 Jun 1991	Kossuth
35	3 May 1996	Fremont	7	three counts	

Finished (or failed) nesting Willets quickly reach Iowa on their way to eastern and Gulf Coast wintering sites.

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**WHIMBREL**      17 May (7)–27 May (5)      —

*Numenius phaeopus*

Spring Whimbrels have a late and extremely narrow migration window, but they are rarely encountered. There were too few fall observations to form a pattern.

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**Table 1. continued**

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<b>HUDSONIAN GODWIT</b> <i>Limosa haemastica</i>	19 Apr (14)–26 May (13)	—
No.	Date	County
450	15 May 1997	Fremont
198	22 Apr 2000	Fremont
159	13 May 1992	Fremont
100	10 May 2003	Pottawattamie
		only rare singles
Hudsonian Godwit is one of several shorebird species whose main spring migration path passes to the west of Iowa. Fall flocks are a very rare occurrence outside of Canada; virtually the entire population flies nonstop to South America (Elphick and Klima 2002).		
<b>MARBLED GODWIT</b> <i>Limosa fedoa</i>	13 Apr (14)–20 May (14)	6 Aug (9)–15 Sep (9)
No.	Date	County
30	30 May 2000	Hardin
20	15 May 1994	Guthrie
20	27 May 1994	Polk
20	22 May 2001	Winneshiek
Marbled Godwit's spring migration window seems to be fixed about a week earlier than Hudsonian Godwit's, but its peak is about a week later according to recent observations, a situation that deserves further study.		
<b>RUDDY TURNSTONE</b> <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	11 May (13)–29 May (14)	4 Aug (14)–7 Sep (12)
No.	Date	County
30	27 May 1994	Polk
21	23 May 2002	Fremont
20	28 May 1989	Adair
19	20 May 1996	Fremont
Spring Ruddy Turnstones peak during the last third of May. The 18 days between the median spring dates is one of the shortest migration periods.		
<b>RED KNOT</b> <i>Calidris canutus</i>	—	28 Aug (8)–19 Sep (5)
There were too few spring Red Knot observations to form a pattern. Fall sightings of both molting adults and later juveniles are increasing in frequency.		

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**Table 1. continued**

<b>SANDERLING</b> <i>Calidris alba</i>	5 May (13)–31 May (12)	24 Jul (14)–3 Nov (14)
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No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
39	26 May 1996	Pottawattamie	56	16 Sep 1995	Polk
20	20 May 1995	Sac	36	24 Oct 1996	Polk
17	30 May 2003	Hardin	29	19 Sep 1996	Polk
10	14 May 2002	Jackson	26	20 Sep 2000	Polk

Juvenile Sanderlings are seemingly drawn to the beaches of Saylorville Reservoir in late fall.

<b>SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER</b> <i>Calidris pusilla</i>	25 Apr (10)–8 Jun (15)	5 Jul (14)–12 Oct (6)
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No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
4,000	23 May 1992	Fremont	500	10 Aug 1991	Johnson
500	13 May 2002	Fremont	500	10 Aug 1991	Marion
350	11 May 1989	Fremont	276	12 Aug 1997	Marion
308	11 May 1991	Fremont	263	7 Aug 2001	Polk
			225	26 Aug 2000	Cerro Gordo

Semipalmated Sandpipers are a bit of a puzzle. They don't reach Iowa until somewhat later in the spring, often lingering into June, and yet are one of the first returning species in early July.

<b>WESTERN SANDPIPER</b> <i>Calidris mauri</i>	2 May (7)–20 May (8)	23 Jul (13)–14 Sep (11)
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No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
3	4 May 1989	Polk	22	3 Sep 1989	Marion
2	six counts		11	4 Aug 1991	Guthrie
			4	28 Aug 2003	Marion

The majority of Western Sandpipers that winter on the southeastern and Gulf Coasts migrate to the south and west of Iowa. Outside of this regular migration path, their rare occurrence is often minimally documented, and confusion with other species abounds.

<b>LEAST SANDPIPER</b> <i>Calidris minutilla</i>	3 Apr (9)–2 Jun (10)	3 Jul (14)–9 Nov (12)
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No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
1,000	11 May 1997	Johnson	650	11 Aug 2003	Polk
350	12 May 1996	Kossuth	450	26 Aug 2000	Cerro Gordo
300	18 May 2002	Winnebago	432	21 Aug 1996	Polk
150	9 May 1990	Johnson	250	10 Aug 1991	Marion

Least Sandpipers share similar habitats and migration windows with Pectoral Sandpipers while in Iowa, although their actual migration distance is much less.

**Table 1. continued**

<b>WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER</b> <i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>			2 May (14)–14 Jun (13)			7 Aug (5)–8 Oct (5)			
No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County				
2,000	19 May 1989	Fremont	5	4 Sep 1989	Cerro Gordo				
1,000	20 May 1996	Fremont	5	16 Sep–2 Oct 2001	Johnson				
580	13 May 2002	Fremont	2	five counts					
200	15 May 1997	Fremont							

White-rumped Sandpipers first appear in early May and their numbers are peaking (especially in SW Iowa) two weeks later. Fall birds are rarities, as most birds follow a looping path over the Atlantic Ocean to winter in South America.

<b>BAIRD'S SANDPIPER</b> <i>Calidris bairdii</i>			2 Apr (15)–23 May (14)			22 Jul (15)–4 Nov (15)		
No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County			
400	27 Mar 1991	Fremont	73	8 Sep 2003	Marion			
100	12 Apr 1992	Fremont	50	18 Aug 1991	Marion			
100	21 Apr 1996	Fremont	33	8 Aug 1994	Polk			
90	25 Apr 1993	Fremont	30	7 Aug 1996	Pottawattamie			
			30	1 Sep 1999	Kossuth			

Spring Baird's Sandpipers arrive early in North America and migrate north with short hops between feeding stops through the center of the continent. This is in sharp contrast with the other main long-distance migration strategy of arriving almost simultaneously at all latitudes along the migration path after a later, longer flight like Hudsonian Godwits or White-rumped Sandpipers (Skagen et al. 1999). Adults migrating south in fall are much less common than both spring birds and juveniles. The adults' main fall staging area is to our west, and they rapidly leave before juveniles start arriving during the last third of August (Jehl 1979).

<b>PECTORAL SANDPIPER</b> <i>Calidris melanotos</i>			20 Mar (12)–10 Jun (11)			7 Jul (15)–17 Nov (14)		
No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County			
3,000	19 Apr 1999	Johnson	5,000	6–7 Aug 1989	Kossuth			
2,000	29 Apr 2003	Johnson	3,000	29 Aug 1991	Johnson			
1,500	13 May 1992	Fremont	2,760	28 Aug 2003	Marion			
1,500	18 May 2002	Winnebago	1,700	11 Aug 2001	Polk			

Widespread and common, the ubiquitous Pectoral is usually Iowa's most numerous sandpiper. Sexual dimorphism in size (most notable in spring) makes it sometimes possible to observe differential migration timing between the sexes: mostly males in April and July, females arrive in May and return in August, and bright juveniles follow in September. Individuals migrating from Siberian nesting sites to Patagonia and back by way of Iowa travel almost 19,000 miles a year.

**Table 1. continued**


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**DUNLIN**  
*Calidris alpina*

13 Apr (13)–2 Jun (15)

30 Sep (12)–15 Nov (15)

No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
200	15 May 1997	Fremont	140	14 Oct 1990	Johnson
184	13 May 2002	Fremont	75	16 Oct 1993	Johnson
150	26 May 2003	Woodbury	61	11 Nov 1998	Marion
120	25 May 1999	Fremont	59	27 Oct 1991	Marion

Unlike other shorebirds, almost all Nearctic Dunlin molt into basic plumage while on the breeding grounds before beginning their southbound migration. I excluded dates of 7, 16, and 30 July in determining the median fall arrival because these migrating adults are so far from the norm for this species (the next earliest arrival was 28 Aug). If they are included, the median fall arrival is still the latest of all the shorebirds at 28 September.

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**STILT SANDPIPER**  
*Calidris himantopus*

6 May (11)–26 May (12)

8 Jul (14)–22 Oct (15)

No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
161	13 May 2002	Fremont	500	7–13 Sep 1991	Marion
110	5 May 1996	Kossuth	420	15 Sep 1989	Kossuth
53	17 May 1991	Fremont	400	11 Sep 1999	Kossuth
28	11 May 1989	Fremont	327	20 Sep 2003	Kossuth

Juvenile Stilt Sandpipers are the most numerous age class, peaking in September.

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**BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER**  
*Tryngites subruficollis*

11 May (6)–23 May (6)

30 Jul (14)–15 Sep (15)

No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
22	19 May 1990	Fremont	146	2 Sep 2000	Polk
8	20 May 1994	Monona	135	1 Sep 1999	Marion
3	22 May 1998	Fremont	42	1 Aug 1999	Johnson
			41	5 Sep 1996	Marion

Buff-breasted Sandpiper holds the distinction of having the narrowest spring migration window of all regularly occurring shorebirds, but additional observations would likely change the spring median dates. They're much more confined to their main migration path to our west in spring than when juveniles wander more widely in fall.

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**SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHER**  
*Limnodromus griseus*

4 May (15)–23 May (14)

7 Jul (13)–15 Sep (11)

No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
300	11 May 1991	Fremont	45	21 Jul 1999	Johnson
90	early May 1994	Louisa	44	12 Jul 1991	Kossuth
81	13 May 2003	Fremont	25	29 Aug 1990	Johnson
80	18 May 1998	Johnson	25	13 Aug 1998	Johnson

Over the past 15 years, the overlap of reported arrival and departure dates between Short and Long-billed Dowitchers in the spring was 27 Apr to 17 May. In the fall, the overlap was 21 Jul to 22 Sep. The overlaps, when using these median dates, are 4 May to 11 May in spring and 9 Aug to 15 Sep in fall. Particular care is needed with dowitcher identification during these periods when adults of both species can be present together. See Long-billed Dowitcher.

**Table 1. continued**

**LONG-BILLED DOWITCHER**    13 Apr (14)–11 May (13)    9 Aug (9)–11 Nov (15)  
*Limnodromus scolopaceus*

No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
156	28 Apr 2003	Warren	123	23 Oct 1998	Marion
137	3 May 1991	Fremont	120	13 Oct 2001	Kossuth
50	27 Apr 1990	Fremont	116	8 Oct 2003	Polk
50	30 Apr 1998	Fremont	88	13 Oct 1991	Lucas

Early returning adult Long-billed Dowitchers in fall are very difficult to find amid the more common Short-billed Dowitchers because subtle plumage distinctions are worn or rapidly molted away. The timing of these fall Long-billed Dowitcher observations corresponds well with the results of a recent review of North American specimens (Caleb Putnam, pers com.). I chose to use only the nine earliest dates through 8 Sep (presumably adults) in determining the median fall arrival date. If the six later dates (most of which refer to juvenile birds) are included, the median fall arrival date becomes 26 Aug.

**WILSON'S PHALAROPE**    22 Apr (13)    11 Sep (11)  
*Phalaropus tricolor*

No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
500	10 May 2003	Pottawattamie	20	2 Sep 2002	Polk
223	13 May 2002	Fremont	16	22 Aug 1989	Kossuth
200	29 Apr 1989	Fremont	14	16 Aug 1991	Kossuth
170	30 Apr 1991	Woodbury	11	6 Sep 1990	Story

There are very few Wilson's Phalaropes seen in the fall when compared to spring. Most birds shift to saline lakes in the West to condition for the southbound flight to South America.

**RED-NECKED PHALAROPE**    12 May (11)–28 May (13)    11 Aug (13)–18 Sep (12)  
*Phalaropus lobatus*

No.	Date	County	No.	Date	County
54	21 May 1990	Dickinson	13	27 Aug 2003	Dickinson
21	20 May 1996	Monona	9	22 Aug 1989	Kossuth
10	13 May 2002	Appanoose	9	23 Sep 2000	Dickinson
6	14 May 1995	Story	8	24 Aug 2002	Hancock

Red-necked Phalarope is another late-May migrant with a narrow window. In the fall, juveniles are more numerous inland than adults.

**RED PHALAROPE**    —    19 Sep (7)–3 Nov (3)  
*Phalaropus fulicaria*

There were too few spring Red Phalarope observations to form a pattern. Only Dunlin regularly arrives later in the fall than Red Phalarope.

<sup>a</sup> Data from *Iowa Bird Life* 59(2)–74(2) [1989–2003] and International Shorebird Survey [1989–1992].

<sup>b</sup> Number of years for which there were available data.

# Field Reports — Spring 2005

Matthew C. Kenne



Matthew C. Keene

## WEATHER

The month of March was characterized by the usual wide swings in temperatures, but its most notable feature was one-half of normal precipitation. Both Guthrie Center and Onawa recorded no measurable precipitation between 24 February and 24 March. Finally, a major snowstorm crossed very northern Iowa on the 18th and left Northwood with 16 inches. Even with this storm, the seasonal snow total was 13 inches less than normal across the state, the 13th lowest in 118 years of records. April and May seemingly switched temperatures: the first three weeks of April averaged 10 degrees above normal, followed by below-normal temperatures continuing into early May. A hard freeze occurred on the 3rd and 4th across the state, the lowest May temperatures since 1967. Mid-May saw flooding rains in northcentral Iowa, and the rest of May remained generally cool and rainy except for continued dryness in the eastern part of the state.

## HABITAT, GENERAL TRENDS

The warm weather in April encouraged several early passerine arrivals, and it encouraged birders to be out and able to find them. The same effect in reverse was also notable: compared to 2004, there seemed to be a delay by early-May passersines until after the freeze. There was also a subtle difference in how flooding rains changed shorebird habitat this spring as compared to 2004: while rises at Coralville Reservoir again ended shorebird staging at that location, sheet-water pools in northcentral Iowa farm fields held more birds this year because the rains came midway through planting instead of after completion. The earlier flooding, however, surely decreased the number of successful waterfowl nests.

Widespread reports of Black-necked Stilts proved that the 2004 invasion was not an aberration, and again we are left with the question: When and where will they nest? Likewise, Eurasian Collared-Doves and Great-tailed Grackles continue to consolidate their positions in Iowa.

The northern owl invasion of winter 2004–2005 carried into spring with the continued presence of the Manly Northern Hawk Owl and the discovery of a late Great Gray Owl in Winneshiek Co. Two other irruptive “winter” species, Pine Siskin and Red-breasted Nuthatch, wandered throughout the spring. Both were widely seen into May, with Red-breasted Nuthatch nesting in Carroll County for only the second time in Iowa. One can’t help wondering if there may have been unnoticed Pine Siskin nesting attempts somewhere in the state.

## UNUSUAL SPECIES

Accidental and Casual species reported this spring were Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Brown Pelican, King Rail, Whimbrel, Ruff, California Gull, White-winged Dove, Northern Hawk Owl, Great Gray Owl, Vermilion Flycatcher, Black-billed Magpie, Western Tanager, Lark Bunting, Black-headed Grosbeak, and Lazuli Bunting.

## SPECIES DATA

All CAPS = Casual or Accidental species. \* = documented. County names are in italics. Full names of contributors are at the end of the article. Abbreviations used: A = area, L = lake, m.ob. = many observers, NA = nature area, NWR = national wildlife refuge, P = park, R = river, RA = recreation area, Res = reservoir, SF = state forest, Sl = slough, SP = state park, USNWR = Union Slough National Wildlife Refuge, WPA = waterfowl production area, WA = wildlife area.

Whenever a specific number of individuals is not indicated in the following species accounts, a single bird was reported.

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING- DUCK:** A flock of 3 or 4 birds was seen and photographed 18–20 April from Dickinson to Hardin to Johnson (m.ob.). The Records Committee will consider the possibilities of wild vs. captive occurrence.

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** There were many more reports of Greater White-fronted than Snow Geese. Most: 1,000 on 23 Mar in Wright (SSP). Last: 2 on 11 May at Dunbar Sl Greene (JJD, SJD).

**Snow Goose:** Few were reported, and it is unclear whether the lack of March reports from along the Missouri R indicates an actual lack of birds. Most: 1,100 on 6 Mar in Emmet (PH) and 750 on 23 Mar in Wright (SSP). Last: 30 migrating over Story 31 May (SSP).

**Ross's Goose:** Reported in March with Canada, Cackling, or White-fronted Geese as often as with Snow Geese. There were eight reports of 1–7 birds, plus 30

on 20 Mar at Amana L *Iowa* (CRE) and 13 on 21 Mar at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (SSP).

**Cackling Goose:** The following reports provided details of identification: 20 on 1 Mar at Clear L *Cerro Gordo* (PH), 4 on 15 Mar at Swan L *Johnson* (CRE), 75 on 29 Mar in *Cerro Gordo* (PH), and 2 on 8 May at Banner WA *Warren* (JS).

**Mute Swan:** All: 22 Mar in *Floyd* (RGo), 8 Apr at Sweet M *Bremer* (DWM), and 15 Apr at a regular location: Dudgeon L *Benton* (DLF).

**Trumpeter Swan:** Eleven unmarked birds 24 Mar in *Worth* (RGo) testify to the success of the region's reintroduction efforts. Up to 15 marked/unmarked birds were seen throughout the spring at Union Sl NWR *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Tundra Swan:** The only report of the spring was of 2 on 22 Mar at L&D 10 *Clayton* (DAk); surely there were more.

**Gadwall:** Most: 370 on 12 Mar at Green Island WA *Jackson* (DAk). Last: 29–31 May at Colo Ponds *Story* (HZ).

**American Wigeon:** Most: 280 on 22 Mar at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAk). Last: 2 on 20 May at Secret L *Fremont* (RIA, PHA)

**American Black Duck:** There were four March reports of 1 or 2 birds, plus the largest group of 7 on 18 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (CRE).

**Mallard:** Most: 1,250 on 23 Mar at Lower Morse L *Wright* (SSP).

**Cinnamon Teal:** All: 2 on 6 Apr at Goose L *Clinton* (PVN) and a Cinnamon/Blue-winged Teal hybrid was at Peterson P *Story* 4 May (WO).

**Northern Shoveler:** Most: 267 on 10 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE).

**Northern Pintail:** 4,200 on 12 Apr at Green Island WA *Jackson* (DAk) was the largest group of puddle ducks reported. The next highest count was 350 on 23 Mar at Lower Morse L *Wright* (SSP).

**Canvasback:** Without any counts from the staging area on the Mississippi R in SE Iowa, the highest totals were 1,900 on 22 Mar at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAk), 1,000 on 26 Mar at Crystal L *Hancock* (JB), and 1,000 at the Frenchtown area 29 Mar (DAk).

**Ring-necked Duck:** Most: 480 on 20 Mar at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAk) and 605 on 2 Apr in *Worth* (PH). A lingerer was at Riverton WA *Fremont* 30 May (LJP, BKP).

**Greater Scaup:** Reported from 14 counties with 10 birds still present on the Mississippi R in *Lee* on 5 May (PEL) and a single still at Grover's L *Dickinson* on 15 May (LAS). Most: 70 were reported 20 Mar at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAk).

**Lesser Scaup:** Most: 2,400 on 22 Mar at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAk) and 4,100 on 10 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE). Three pairs were still present 28–29 May at Dan Green Sl *Clay* (LAS).

**Surf Scoter:** The only report was 7 May at Keokuk *Lee* (PEL).

**White-winged Scoter:** Three were on a pond in *Ida* 12 Mar (DoP).

**Black Scoter:** Only one: 16 May at Chichauqua WA *Polk* (DK-details) [second latest].

**Long-tailed Duck:** The only report was of a late bird 30 Apr in *Madison* (DTh-details).

**Bufflehead:** Most: 70 on 26 Mar at Pool 9 *Allamakee* (DAk). Last: 13 on 15 May at Grover's L *Dickinson* (LAS).

**Common Goldeneye:** Most: 550 on 20 Mar at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAk). The last 2 were at Keokuk *Lee* 7 May (PEL).

**Hooded Merganser:** Most: 650 on 20 Mar at the Frenchtown area *Clayton* (DAk). Broods were noted in *Greene*, *Polk*, and *Dickinson* by the end of the period (WO, JS, LAS).

**Common Merganser:** Most: 1,100 on 19 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (AB). Last: 3 May at both Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and Saylorville Res (JJD).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Most: 97 on 25 Mar at Red Rock Res *Marion* and 72 on 26 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (both AB). Last: 7 May at L Macbride *Johnson* (CRE).

**Ruddy Duck:** Most: 237 on 10 Apr at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE). Four were still at Colo Ponds *Story* 31 May (HZ).

**Gray Partridge:** Not reported south of *Carroll*, *Guthrie*, *Story*.

**Ruffed Grouse:** All: 5 Apr near Guttenberg *Clayton* (DAk) and 14 and 19 May at Stephens SF *Lucas* (AJ, RIA, PHA).

**Greater Prairie Chicken:** Up to 12 lekking birds were reported at Kellerton BCA *Ringgold* (AB, JG, RLC, RIA, PHA, CRE).

**Northern Bobwhite:** Only reported from *Warren*, *Decatur*, *Polk*, and *Woodbury* (JRL, JG, DTh, GLV).

**Common Loon:** First: 22 Mar at Maffitt Res *Polk* (JG). Most: only 4 on 7 May at L Macbride *Johnson* (CRE). Last: 10 May at Swan L *Carroll* (MTh).

**Pied-billed Grebe:** First: 19 Mar at Pleasant Cr RA *Linn* (DLF) and 20 Mar at Little Wall L *Hamilton* (SSP).

**Horned Grebe:** Reported from eight locations. First: 14 Mar at L Manawa *Pottawattamie* (BE). Most and last: a total of 21 on 23 Apr in *Wright* and *Hancock* (SSP).

**Red-necked Grebe:** All: 21 Apr until 5 May at Otter Cr M *Tama* (CRE, DP, JG-photo, JLF, JJD, RLC, THK), 23 Apr at West Twin L *Hancock* (SSP-photo), a different bird 2 May at West Twin L (SSP-photo), and 2 on 9 May at Eagle L *Hancock* (PH, RGo).

**Eared Grebe:** First: 2 Apr at Silver L Worth (PH). Most: 10 on 15 May at Grover's L Dickinson (LAS). Last: 2 on 20 May at Willow Sl Mills (JJD).

**Western Grebe:** All: 5 on 30 Apr at Trumbull L Clay (LAS), 5 May at L Manawa Pottawattamie (LKP, BKP), 18 May at Union Slough NWR Kossuth (MCK), 2 on 28–29 May at Dan Green Sl Clay (LAS), and 2 on 28 May at West Swan L Emmet (LAS).

**BROWN PELICAN:** A report was referred to the Records Committee.

**American White Pelican:** First: 60 on 6 Mar at the Mississippi R Scott (SMF). Most: 700 on 2 Apr at Bussey L Clayton (DAk).

**Double-crested Cormorant:** First: 20 Mar in Marshall (MPr). Most: 100 on 30 Apr at Riverton WA Fremont (LJP, BKP) and 100 on 4 May at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CRE).

**American Bittern:** 1–3 birds were reported from 22 locations. First: 9 Apr at Otter Cr M Tama (DP).

**Least Bittern:** 1–3 birds were reported from nine locations, with the first on 6 May at Chichauqua WA Polk (DK). Most: 10 on 29 May at Banner WA Warren (JS).

**Great Egret:** First: 2 on 2 Apr at Bussey L Clayton (DAk). Most: 16 on 28 May at Ada Hayden P Story (WO) and 10 on 29 May at Heron Bend Lee (CJC).

**Snowy Egret:** All: 19–20 Apr at L Macbride Johnson (DP, JLF), 29 Apr at Errington M Polk (RTr), 7–8 May at Dunbar Sl Greene (RTh, BE), 7 May at New L Woodbury (BFH), 10 May at Riverton WA Fremont (LJP, BKP), and 14 May at Chichauqua WA Polk (DK).

**Little Blue Heron:** An adult was at Bauer Sl Hamilton 21–24 Apr (JJD, RIA, PHA-photo, JG-photo).

**Cattle Egret:** Singles 12 Apr at Moeckly Pr Polk (BE) and 15 Apr at Knudsen's Pond Cerro Gordo (RGo) were the first of reports from fifteen counties.

Most: 13–26 birds were seen 14–22 May in Warren, Dickinson, and Polk (PH, LAS, ETh, DK, BE).

**Black-crowned Night-Heron:** There were reports of 1–8 birds from twelve counties with the first 2 on 23 Apr at Jensen M Madison (RTr). Most: 12 on 27 Apr at Dean Appanoose (RLC).

**White-faced Ibis:** First: 20 Apr at Cardinal M Wimnesiek (FL). Singles were at Akron Plymouth 28 Apr (BFH), South R WA Warren 30 Apr (RTr), and Dunbar Sl Greene 31 May (RTh). Three were at Hawkeye WA Johnson 8 May (CRE). A flock at Riverton WA Fremont swelled from 13 to 18 birds 30 Apr until 19 May (CNK, PEL, CRE).

**Plegadis species:** Early dull ibis were found 10 Apr at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CRE, JG) and 20 Apr at Breda Carroll (RTh),

**Turkey Vulture:** There were five reports during the first week of March across southern Iowa.

**Osprey:** First: 6 Apr at L Meyer Wimnesiek (Larry Reis fide DC). Sixteen other singles were reported throughout the period.

**Mississippi Kite:** All: 9 May at Otter Cr M Tama (MTW\*) [ties second earliest], and 2 on 19 May over the Des Moines R valley Boone (MTW\*).

**Bald Eagle:** Kossuth had its first confirmed nesting along the East Fork of the Des Moines R north of Algona (MCK).

**Northern Harrier:** Late birds, possibly nesting, were noted 15 May at Kettleson Hogsback Dickinson (LAS), 24 May at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CJC), 27 May at Owego Wetlands Woodbury (LJP, BKP), and 30 May at Dunbar Sl Greene (SSP).

**Sharp-shinned Hawk:** Last: 21 May at Squaw Cr P Linn (DLF).

**Cooper's Hawk:** Nesting activity was reported from *Kossuth*, *Hancock*, *Palo Alto*, *Warren* (3), *Story*, and *Johnson* (MCK, SSP, LAS, JB, JS, WO, CRE).

**Northern Goshawk:** The only report was 27 Mar at Martin Access *Cherokee* (LAS).

**Red-shouldered Hawk:** All: 6 Mar at Cone M *Louisa* (CRE), 8 Mar in *Allamakee* (FL), 12 Mar at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (EB), 13 Mar at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DK), from 3 Apr to the end of the period at Grammer Grove WA *Marshall* (MPr), 5 Apr in *Polk* (DK), 2 on 9 Apr in *Ringgold* (JS), 2 on 28 Apr at Coon Cr Access *Winneshiek* (DK), 1 May in *Decatur* (JRL), 22 May at Aldo Leopold WMA *Bremer* (AlB), and 2 on 24 May at Yellow R SF *Allamakee* (DK).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** First: 2 on 9 Apr at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (JPB). A pair was noted 13–29 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP), but all other reports were of single birds.

**Swainson's Hawk:** All: 2 Apr at Squaw Cr P *Linn* (DLF), 19 Apr in *Kossuth* (MCK), 2 on 20 Apr at Zirbel Sl *Cerro Gordo* (PH), 26 Apr in *Decatur* (JRL), 3 on 3 May at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (MOr), 4 May at DeKalb WA *Decatur* (RIA, PHA), and 14 May at Stephens SF *Lucas* (DP, DAk).

**Red-tailed Hawk:** A Harlan's Hawk was noted in *Madison* 5 Mar (JG).

**Rough-legged Hawk:** Most: 5 on 2 Mar at Owego Wetlands *Woodbury* (GLV). Last: 26 Apr at Big M *Butler* (DK). Eight other birds were reported.

**Golden Eagle:** All: singles on 17 and 24 Mar at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (BE, MOr), and 26 Mar at Dean *Appanoose* (RLC-details).

**Merlin:** Seven were at the Glendale Cemetery roost in Des Moines 3 Mar. They were identified as 3 females and one male of the Taiga race, and 3 female

Prairie race (JG). Seven single migrants were noted 5 Mar to 27 Apr.

**Peregrine Falcon:** First: returning nesters were at Davenport *Scott* on 6 Mar (SMF) and Lansing *Allamakee* on 8 Mar (FL). A late push of single migrants was noted 13–15 May in *Polk*, *Story*, *Decatur*, *Woodbury*, and *Warren* (SJD, WO, JJD, GLV).

**Prairie Falcon:** One on 13 Mar in *Butler* was the only report (RGo-details).

**KING RAIL:** One found 10 May by Jay Gilliam at the Cumming wetlands *Warren* became famous during the IOU Spring Meeting and it remained through the end of the period (see p. 146).

**Virginia Rail:** First: an injured bird was found in *Cerro Gordo* by Lowell Washburn of the DNR on 30 Mar (fide PH) [record early] and one was calling at Big Wall L *Wright* on 8 Apr (SSP-details) [third earliest].

**Sora:** First: 14 Apr at Otter Cr M *Tama* (THK, JLF) and in *Decatur* (JRL). Most: 14 on 9 May at Wildin Pr *Kossuth* (MCK) and 23 on 14 May at Cumming wetlands *Warren* (JG).

**Common Moorhen:** All: 26 Apr at Hanlontown M *Worth* (RGo), 30 Apr to 17 May at Long Pond *Guthrie* (DTh, RIA-photo, PHA, JJD, SJD), 7 May in *Lee* (PEL), 21 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (MPr), 2 on 23 May at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DK), and 28 May at Cheever L *Emmet* (LAS).

**American Coot:** Most: 3,200 on 2 Apr at L&D 10 *Clayton* (DAk). A leucistic individual was described 24 Apr at Diehl Wetlands *Warren* as whitish with a golden-brown head (JB, JG).

**Sandhill Crane:** Cranes were reported from ten locations, but repeatedly only from Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (DC), Cone M *Louisa* (BSc, CJC), and Otter Cr M *Tama*, where 13 were found 21 Mar (DP). Most: 75 migrants 19 Mar at Pool Sl *Allamakee* (FL).

**Black-bellied Plover:** First: 7 May at both Dunbar Sl *Greene* (JJD) and Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CJC). Most: 31 on 7 May in *Hancock* (PH). Last: 3 on 30 May at both Dunbar Sl (SSP) and in *Kossuth* (MCK).

**American Golden-Plover:** First: 115 on 3 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (LJP, PHA). Most: 228 on 10 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE) and 225 in eight flyby flocks 14 May at Wildin Pr *Kossuth* (MCK). Last: 30 May in *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Semipalmated Plover:** First: 23 Apr at Lower Morse L *Wright* (SSP). By far the most were 200 on 7 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE). Last: 4 on 30 May at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO).

**Piping Plover:** All: 2 on 23 Apr at New L *Woodbury* (BFH), 28 Apr at Sweet M *Bremer* (DWM), 28 Apr and 7 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (BE, JJD), 11–12 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD, JJD, DTh), 4–5 May at Spirit L *Dickinson* (ETh-photo), and 5 on 19 May at MidAmerican Ponds *Pottawattamie* (CRE), with only a single bird remaining at MidAmerican Ponds 20 May (RIA, PHA).

**Black-necked Stilt:** All: 2 on 17 Apr at Runnels *Marion* (AB, RIA, PHA, JG-photos, SSP), 7–10 May at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CJC, DP, CRE, DAk), 7 stilts on 8 May in *Boone* (BE) that dwindled to one on 9 May (JJD), 1 or 2 birds 11–12 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SJD, JJD, DTh), and 2 on 25–26 May at McIntosh SP *Cerro Gordo* (PH, RGo, CJF).

**American Avocet:** All: 26 Apr at Eagle L Flats *Hancock* (CJF, RGo), 8 on 26 Apr at Colo Ponds *Story* (JJD, HZ, MPr), 3 May at Meier WA *Hardin* (MPr), and 2 on 19 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SSP).

**Greater Yellowlegs:** First: 28 Mar in *Story* (SSP). Most: 50 on 20 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE) and 45 on 4 May at Dean *Appanoose* (RLC). Last: 30 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SSP).

**Lesser Yellowlegs:** First: 2 on 26 Mar at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (MHB). Most: 1,750 on 30 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (CNK), 2,500 on 6 May at Riverton WA (PEL), and 1,000 on 10 May at Hawkeye WA (CRE). 300 were found 4 May at Dean *Appanoose* (RLC) and 7 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (RTh). The last reports, both on 30 May, were of 2 in *Kossuth* (MCK) and 1 at Dunbar Sl (SSP).

**Solitary Sandpiper:** First: 3 on 13 Apr at Dean *Appanoose* (RLC). Most: 23 on 5 May in *Winneshiek* (DC). Last: 2 on 18 May in *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Willet:** Willets were reported from 18 counties. The first was 17 Apr at Jensen M *Madison* (RTr). Most: 20 on 28 Apr at Hawkeye WA *Johnson* (CRE), 30 on 30 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (CNK), and 20 on 1 May in *Decatur* (JRL). Last: 29 May at Moeckly Pr *Polk* (AB) and 2 on 30 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (SSP).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** First: 12 Apr at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) [second earliest] and 16 Apr at Swan L *Johnson* (CRE).

**Upland Sandpiper:** The Allen's got this new yard bird 11 May in a flooded cornfield behind their home in *Dallas* (RIA, PHA).

**WHIMBREL:** All: 2 on 27 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (JWR\*).

**Hudsonian Godwit:** First: 16 Apr at Ada Hayden P *Story* (WO) and 2 on 17 Apr at Runnels WA *Marion* (RTr). Most: 30 on 10 May at Riverton WA *Fremont* (LKP, BKP), 29 on 14 May at Breda *Carroll* (RTh), and 46 on 18 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (JG), but all other reports were of less than 8 godwits. Last: 1–7 birds 28–30 May in *Story*, *OBrien*, *Polk*, and *Greene* (WO, DK, AB, SSP).

**Marbled Godwit:** All: 2 on 17 Apr at Runnels WA *Marion* (SSP, JG), 5 on 27 Apr around Coralville Res *Johnson* (JLF, DP, CRE), 4 on 30 Apr at Riverton WA *Fremont* (CNK), singles 1–2 May at Dunbar Sl *Greene* (JJD, RIA, PHA) and

Jensen M Madison (RTr), and 2 on 18 May at Colo Ponds Story (HZ).

**Ruddy Turnstone:** First and most: 8 on 15 May in Lucas (RLC). Singles were found 27–28 May in Kossuth, Hardin, and Emmet (MCK, MPr, LAS).

**Sanderling:** First: 3 May in Marshall (MPr) and then 4 on 9 May at Jester P Polk (BE). Last: 3 on 27 May at McIntosh SP Cerro Gordo (PH), 4 on 28 May in O'Brien (DK) and 30 May at Hubbard Hardin (MPr).

**Semipalmated Sandpiper:** First: 6 May at Alden Hardin (MPr) and 10 on 7 May at Hawkeye WA Johnson (DAk). Most: 140 on 29 May at Polk City WA Polk (AB) and 175 on 30 May at Dunbar Sl Greene (SSP).

**Western Sandpiper:** One along the Mississippi R Dubuque 10 May was the only report (RIA, PHA-details).

**Least Sandpiper:** First: 2 on 10 Apr in Hancock (PH). Most: 1,000 on 10 May at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CRE). Last: 5 on 27 May in Kossuth (MCK) and 40 still at Dunbar Sl Greene 30 May (SSP).

**White-rumped Sandpiper:** First and most: 900 on 6 May at Riverton Fremont (PEL). Later peak counts were 116 on 9 May at Dunbar Sl Greene (AB), 250 on 19 May at New L Woodbury (BFH), and 100 on 27 May in Kossuth (MCK).

**Baird's Sandpiper:** First: 22 Mar at L&D 10 Clayton (DAk\*). The next earliest arrivals were 4 on 10 Apr at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CRE). Most: 1,800 on 6 May at Riverton WA Fremont (PEL), a record high count. Last: 30 May at Dunbar Sl Greene (SSP).

**Pectoral Sandpiper:** First: 4 on 28 Mar at Ada Hayden P Story (WO). Most: 1,000–3,000 were counted at Hawkeye WA Johnson 10 Apr until 10 May (CRE, THK), and 2,000 were found 6 May at Riverton WA Fremont (PEL). Last: 21 birds were at five locations in Kossuth 30–31 May (MCK).

**Dunlin:** First: 4 on 15 Apr at Coralville Res Johnson (CRE). Most: 95 on 7 May at Dunbar Sl Greene (RTh), 90 on 18 May at Dunbar Sl (JG), and 90 again at that location 30 May (SSP). Dunlins were still widespread 30 May with 36 at Riverton WA Fremont (LJP, BKP), 69 in Kossuth (MCK), and 8 at Ada Hayden P Story (WO).

**Stilt Sandpiper:** First: 4 on 17 Apr at Runnells WA Marion (AB) [second earliest]. The next were 4 on 8 May at Saylorville Res Polk (DK). Except for 107 on 19 May at New L Woodbury (BFH), low numbers were reported. Last: 9 on 30 May at Dunbar Sl Greene (SSP).

**RUFF:** A female was at Riverton WA Fremont 6 May (PEL-details).

**Short-billed Dowitcher:** First: 6 on 1 May at Banner WA Warren (AB) and then 5 on 7 May at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CRE). Most: 45–50 on 16–18 May at Dunbar Sl Greene (RTh, JG), otherwise 14 on 18 May in Kossuth (MCK) and 12 on 20 May at Chichaqua WA Polk (DK). Last: 2 on 30 May at Dunbar Sl (SSP).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** First: 17 Apr at Runnells WA Marion (SSP, JG). Most: 550 on 30 Apr at Riverton WA Fremont (CNK) growing to 2,000 on 6 May (PEL), record high counts. 120 birds were the peak elsewhere: 3 May at Colo Ponds Story HZ and 4 May at Dean Appanoose (RLC). Last: 2 on 9 May in Hancock (PH) and 2 on 10 May at Ada Hayden P Story (WO). I received essentially no identification details for either dowitcher spp.

**Wilson's Snipe:** The peak was in early April: 22 on 2 Apr at Banner WA Warren (AJ), 28 on 8 Apr at Zirbel Sl Cerro Gordo (PH), and 24 on 10 Apr at Dean Appanoose (RLC). One was still at Ada Hayden P Story on 29 May (WO).

**American Woodcock:** First: 3 on 6 Mar in Polk (JB). A total of 16 were found displaying at several locations at Hawkeye WA Johnson 21 Mar (CRE). Adults with downy young were observed in Decatur (SSP) and Winneshiek (DK).

**Wilson's Phalarope:** First: 20 Apr at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CRE). Most: 65 on 30 Apr and 75 on 6 May at Riverton WA Fremont (CNK, LJP, BKP, PEL) and 80 on 10 May at Hawkeye WA (CRE). Three males were still at Dunbar Sl Greene 30 May (SSP).

**Red-necked Phalarope:** All: 19 May at New L Woodbury (BFH), 3 on 27 May in Kossuth (MCK), 30 May at Dunbar Sl Greene (SSP-photo), and 30 May in Kossuth (MCK).

**Franklin's Gull:** First: 2 on 15 Mar at L Manawa Pottawattamie (LJP, BKP). Most: 1,300 on 15 May at Grover's L Dickinson (LAS). 250 were still at Moeckly Pr Polk 29 May (AB).

**Bonaparte's Gull:** First: 3 on 31 Mar at Rice L Winnebago (RGo) and 19 also on 31 Mar at Little Wall L Hamilton (SSP). Most: 96 on 4 May at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CRE). Last: 16 May at Cardinal M Winneshiek (DC).

**Ring-billed Gull:** Most: 14,000 on 25 Mar at Red Rock Res Marion (AB) and 21,000 on 31 Mar at Saylorville Res Polk (BE).

**CALIFORNIA GULL:** A report was referred to the Records Committee.

**Herring Gull:** Most: 1,300 on 12 Mar at Coralville Res Johnson (CRE). Last: 12 May at Jester P Polk (DTh).

**Thayer's Gull:** All: An adult 6 Mar at Credit Island Scott (SMF), a juv 27 Mar at L Manawa Pottawattamie (Jon Strong-details), and 1st-year bird 19 Apr at Coralville Res Johnson (JLF-details) [second latest].

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** All: an adult 6 Mar at Credit Island Scott (SMF-details), an adult 26 Mar at L Manawa

Pottawattamie (LJP, BKP-details), an adult 28 Mar at Rice L Worth (PH-details), and 4 May at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CRE\*) [record latest].

**Glaucous Gull:** All: 2 adults and one juv 6 Mar at Credit Island Scott (SMF) and a juv 12–14 Mar at Coralville Res Johnson (CRE, DP).

**Caspian Tern:** First: 3 on 5 May at Ada Hayden P Story (WO). Most: 142 on 12 May at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD). Last: 2 on 14 May at Cedar L Linn (DLF).

**Common Tern:** First: 27 Apr at Meier WA Hardin (MPr-details). Like Spring 2004, Common Terns were found in unusually large flocks: 38 on 7 May at Montrose Lee (PEL), 43 and 65 counted on 12 May at Saylorville Res Polk (SJD, JJD, DTh), and 20 also on 12 May at L&D 14 Scott (SMF). Last: 2 on 21 May at Rathbun Res Appanoose (RLC) and 3 on 25 May at Union Sl NWR Kossuth (PH, MCK).

**Forster's Tern:** First: 5 on 16 Apr at L Manawa Pottawattamie (LJP, BKP) and 2 also on 16 Apr at Rathbun Res Appanoose (RLC). Most: 35 on 12 May at Saylorville Res Polk (DTh).

**Least Tern:** All: 2 on 19 May at MidAmerican Ponds Pottawattamie (CRE), but only one was left at that location 20 May (RIA, PHA).

**Black Tern:** First: 2 on 2 May at East Twin L Hancock (SSP). Most: 500 on 14 May at New L Woodbury (GLV). There were still 165 present 30 May at Dan Green Sl Clay (LAS).

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Collared-Doves continued to be found in Marshall, Marion, Story, Kossuth, Polk, Guthrie, Winnebago, Warren, Poweshiek, and Boone. New county records were reported for Muscatine, Clinton, Mahaska, and Winneshiek (MHB, PVN, RIA, PHA, DC).

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE:** One visited a feeder in Sioux City Woodbury 10–13 Apr (fide Jack Curran-photos).

**Black-billed Cuckoo:** First: 12 May at Amana Nature Trail Iowa (DP). They were later found in Pottawattamie, Decatur, Lee, Johnson, and Washington (MOr, JRL, JG, MCD, CJC, CRE)

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo:** First: 7 May at Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren (JLF) and 8 May at Cedar Rapids Linn (DLF). They were reported from ten additional counties.

**Barn Owl:** The only one: 28 Mar at Otter Cr M Tama (RIA, PHA).

**Snowy Owl:** A lone report: 15 Mar in Lyon (ETH).

**NORTHERN HAWK OWL:** "Manly" entertained visitors in Worth until 2 Apr (AJ, RGo, PH).

**GREAT GRAY OWL:** One first found near Decorah Winneshiek 6–7 Apr by David Cavagnaro was relocated and photographed 17 Apr (fide DC; 12 May 2005 *Decorah Journal*).

**Long-eared Owl:** All: 8 Mar at Worth Co P Worth (RGo), 9 Mar at Pleasant Cr RA Linn (SMF), and 2 on 16 Mar at Lime Cr Nature Center Cerro Gordo (PH).

**Short-eared Owl:** All: 4 on 1 Mar in Wayne (RIA, PHA), 6 Mar at Hooper WA Warren (JG), 10 Mar in Decatur (JLF), 2 on 26 Mar at Kellerton BCA Ringgold (JG), 2 on 16 Apr in Wayne (RLC), 24 Apr at Colo Ponds Story (HZ), and 28 Apr in Winnebago (CJF).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** All: 2 Mar at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MPr), 3 Mar at Hawkeye WA Johnson (MHB), 3 on 20 Mar at Grammer Grove WA (MPr), and 2 Apr at L Meyer Winneshiek (Larry Reis fide DC).

**Common Nighthawk:** First: 7 May in Warren (JB).

**Chuck-will's-widow:** There was one report from "The Chuck Spot" near Waubonsie SP Fremont: 19 May (CRE).

**Whip-poor-will:** First: 18 Apr in Johnson (CRE). One on 24 May at

Deception Hollow Webster was the most northwesterly of only seven reports.

**Chimney Swift:** First: 13 Apr at Dean Appanoose (RLC).

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** First: 20 Apr at Johnston Polk (DTh-details) [record earliest], and the next was 27 Apr at Algona Kossuth (Ray Johnson fide MCK).

**Yellow-bellied Sapsucker:** First: one at L Ahquabi SP Warren 6 Mar was probably a winterer. Eight of ten first arrivals were from the first ten days in April. The usual probable north Iowa nesters were seen 23–29 May at Cardinal M Winneshiek (EB), 24 May at Bacon Cr P Woodbury (GLV), and 26 May Burr Oak Winneshiek (DC).

**Northern Flicker:** A Red-shafted Flicker was observed 20 Mar at Hawkeye WA Johnson (CRE).

**Pileated Woodpecker:** Perhaps becoming more widespread in northcentral Iowa, birds were found 9 May at Pilot Knob SP Hancock (CJF), 21 May in Floyd (RGo), and 24 May in Worth (RGo).

**Olive-sided Flycatcher:** First: 7 May at both Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren (THK) and Croton Unit Lee (JLF). They were observed 29–31 May in Poweshiek, Story, Dallas, Webster, and Marshall (BVa, WO, JB, MHB, MPr).

**Eastern Wood-Pewee:** One was observed singing 17 Apr at Rush L Palo Alto (LAS-details) [record earliest]. The next was reported 29 Apr at Squaw Cr P Linn (DLF) [third earliest].

**Yellow-bellied Flycatcher:** First: 15 May in Poweshiek (BVa). Last: fifteen birds were reported from eight locations 25–31 May (MOr, PH, MCK, AB, CJC, DTh, MPr). Like dowitchers, few birders supported their Empid identifications.

**Acadian Flycatcher:** First: 7 May at Croton Unit Lee (JLF). Most: 20 on 30 May at Brinton Timber Washington (CRE).

**Alder Flycatcher:** First: 13 May at West Des Moines Polk (JB-details). Last: 14 birds were reported from nine locations 27–31 May (CJC, KN, WO, MCK, DTh, CRE, SSP).

**Willow Flycatcher:** First: 3 on 17 May at South Sycamore Bottoms Johnson (CRE). Most: 8 on 21 May at Rathbun Res Appanoose (RLC).

**Least Flycatcher:** First: 7 May at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MPr) and 5 on 9 May at Pilot Knob SP Hancock (PH). Last: 2 on 31 May at Algona Kossuth (MCK).

**Eastern Phoebe:** First: 22 Mar in Decatur (JRL).

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER:** Iowa's fifth, a male, was discovered 15 May by Joe Monahan at Whiterock NA Guthrie and remained on territory into summer (m.ob.).

**Great Crested Flycatcher:** First: 29 Apr in Decatur (JRL).

**Western Kingbird:** Away from Pottawattamie, Woodbury, and Monona, one was at L Ahquabi SP Warren 14 May (CJC, DAK) and another in Johnson 23 May (CJC).

**Eastern Kingbird:** First: 26 Apr at Centerville Appanoose (RLC).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** One was photographed 27 May in Boone, but not relocated (Mark McInroy-photo). There were two additional IABirds listserv reports about that same time in SE and SW Iowa, but no details were submitted.

**Loggerhead Shrike:** There were reports of 1 or 2 birds in twenty counties east from Fremont to Greene to Dickinson.

**Northern Shrike:** Seven birds were reported from seven counties, the farthest south on 19 and 27 Mar at Pleasant Cr RA Linn (DLF, DP) and 27 Mar at Chichauqua WA Polk (RIA, PHA).

**White-eyed Vireo:** First: 4 May at Stephens SF Lucas (RIA, PHA). They were

also found in Johnson, Warren, Lee, Linn, and Marshall.

**Bell's Vireo:** First: 7 May in Ann Johnson's yard Warren and 9 May in Hancock (PH, RGo). Woodbury was the Bell's Vireo capital of Iowa, with 12 on 19 May at Brown's L (GLV) and 17 on 28 May at Sioux City Pr (GLV).

**Yellow-throated Vireo:** First: 2 May in Decatur (JRL) and then three locations on 6–7 May.

**Blue-headed Vireo:** First: 6 May at Otter Cr P Warren (JB). Most: 9 on 7 May at Brookside P Story (SSP). Last: 2 on 20 May at L Meyer Winneshiek (DC).

**Warbling Vireo:** There was a flurry of early birds: 20 Apr in Jefferson (DiP\*), 20 Apr at Macbride RA Johnson (DP), 5 on 20 Apr at Laceys-Keosauqua SP Van Buren (JLF), and 21 Apr at the Frenchtown area Clayton (DAk) — the second and third earliest dates on record.

**Philadelphia Vireo:** First: 7 May in Decatur (JRL). Most: 4 on 18 May at Brookside P Story (SSP). Last: 28 May at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MPr).

**Red-eyed Vireo:** First: 5 May in Decatur (JRL) and then 7 May at both Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MPr) and in Appanoose (RLC).

**BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE:** A report was referred to the Records Committee.

**Purple Martin:** First: 8 on 2 Apr at Bussey L Clayton swelled to an amazing 380 at that location 6 Apr (DAk).

**Tree Swallow:** Two on 16 Mar at Little Wall L Hamilton were hunting insects over patches of ice (SSP-details) [ties second earliest]. The next were 2 on 19 Mar at Cedar L Linn (BSc).

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** First: 4 on 9 Apr at Palisades-Kepler SP Linn (BSc).

**Bank Swallow:** First: 19 Apr at Alden Hardin (MPr). Most: 50 at the Port Neal Ponds Woodbury 23 Apr (BFH).

**Cliff Swallow:** First: 20 on 19 Apr at Iowa City Johnson (JPB).

**Barn Swallow:** First: 10 Apr at Dean Appanoose (RLC) followed by 12 Apr in Decatur (JRL) and 3 on 12 Apr in Jefferson (DiP).

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** Iowa's second successful nesting occurred in May at the Shirley Schirck residence in Carroll Carroll. Please see the accompanying note on p. 149 in this issue. Fifteen other May birds were seen at 13 locations, with the last wanderer 30 May at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MPr).

**Carolina Wren:** Other than exploring singles 6 May in Cerro Gordo (RGo) and 17 May in Clayton (DAK), reports were east and south from Polk.

**Bewick's Wren:** The "junkyard" wrens near Croton Unit Lee were relocated (JG-photo, RIA, PHA, MCD, CJC).

**House Wren:** First: singing 14 Apr at Ann Johnson's yard Warren and 2 on 16 Apr at Stephens SF Lucas (RLC).

**Winter Wren:** First: 30 Mar at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MPr). Last: 2 on 13 May in Lucas (BE).

**Sedge Wren:** First: 3 on 1 May at Jensen M Madison (JG) and 2 on 3 May at Cedar Bluffs NA Mahaska (SSP).

**Marsh Wren:** First: 14 Apr at Chichauqua WA Polk (SSP-details) [record earliest]. The next was 25 Apr at Otter Cr M Tama (MPr).

**Golden-crowned Kinglet:** First: 20 Mar at Belva-Deer RA Keokuk (BSc) and 22 Mar at Pine L SP Hardin (MPr). Most: 15 on 3 Apr at Lizard Cr WA Webster (MHB).

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet:** First: 29 Mar at Algona Kossuth (MCK). Most: 15 on 7 May at Brookside P Story (SSP). Last: 20 May at Algona (MCK).

**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** First: 11 Apr in Decatur (JRL).

**Veery:** First: 7 May at Brookside P Story (SSP) and 3 on 9 May at Pilot Knob SP Hancock (PH). Possible nesting birds

were reported 27 May at Coralville Res Johnson (CJC) and 29 May at Hanging Rock Woods Johnson (MCD).

**Gray-cheeked Thrush:** First: 5 May in both Decatur (SSP) and at A.A. Call SP Kossuth (MCK). Most: 30 on 9 May at Pilot Knob SP Hancock (PH). Last: 28 May at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MPr).

**Swainson's Thrush:** First: 5 May at both Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo (RGo) and A.A. Call SP Kossuth (MCK). Widely reported as common: 90 on 9 May at Pilot Knob SP Hancock (PH), 42 on 14 May at A.A. Call SP (MCK), and 81 on 14 May at Hitchcock NA Pottawattamie (MOr). Last: 31 May at Brookside P Story (SSP).

**Hermit Thrush:** First: 3 Apr at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MPr) and 2 on 3 Apr at Lizard Cr WA Webster (MHB). Most: 10 on 4 Apr at L Meyer Winneshiek (Larry Reis fide DC). Last: 4 May at Grammer Grove WA and Liscomb Marshall (MPr), 4 on 4 May at Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo (RGo), and 2 on 5 May at A.A. Call SP Kossuth (MCK).

**Wood Thrush:** First: 3 on 1 May at Summerset Trail Warren (RTr) and then 5 May at Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo (RGo). Most: 11 on 30 May at Brinton Timber Washington (CRE, CJC).

**Varied Thrush:** Bruce Morrison photographed a stunning male in his yard in O'Brien 22 May [record latest].

**Gray Catbird:** First: 5 May in Jefferson (DiP) and Decatur (JRL)

**Northern Mockingbird:** Five were found 3 Apr in Muscatine (CRE, CJC); thereafter, only single birds were found. Other than 25 Apr into May at Burr Oak Winneshiek (DC) and 9 May at Forest City Hancock (PH, RGo, CJF), they were found south and east from Boone (19 May WO).

**Brown Thrasher:** First: 3 Apr in Johnson (CRE) and 4 Apr in Decatur (JRL).

**American Pipit:** First: 9 on 19 Mar at Saylorville Polk (AB) and 4 on 19 Mar at Sandhill L Woodbury (BFH). Most: 58 on 5 Apr in Winneshiek (DK), 75 on 8 Apr in Polk (DTh), 70 on 10 Apr in Kossuth (PH, RGo), and 49 on 1 May in Clayton (DAk). Last: 3 on 6 May in Mahaska (SSP).

**Blue-winged Warbler:** First: 5 May at Hickory Hill P Johnson (DP, MCD).

**Golden-winged Warbler:** First: 4 May in Jefferson (DiP). They were reported from twelve counties, with the highest count 10 on 15 May at Hickory Hill P Johnson (CRE). Last: 17 May at Pine L SP Hardin (MPr).

**Tennessee Warbler:** First: 6 May in Hardin (MPr), Story (SSP), and Warren (JB). Most: 46 on 14 May at L Ahquabi SP Warren (SSP) and 60 on 16 May at Donnellson Unit Lee (CRE). Two were still singing 29 May at Brookside P Story (SSP).

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** First: singing birds 10 Apr at Walnut Woods SP Polk (RIA, PHA) [record earliest] and 12 Apr at Pine L SP Hardin (MPr) [second earliest]. Last: 21 May in Floyd (RGo, PH).

**Nashville Warbler:** First: 6 May in Cerro Gordo, Jefferson, Warren, and Story (RGo, DiP, JB, SSP). Most: 14 on 7 May at Brookside P Story (SSP). Last: 24 May in Cerro Gordo (RGo).

**Northern Parula:** First and most: 10 on 16 Apr at Stephens SF Lucas (RLC).

**Yellow Warbler:** More early arrivals: 20 Apr in Jefferson (DiP-details) [record earliest], 22 Apr at Cone M Louisa (JJD-details) [second earliest], 22 Apr at Pleasant Cr RA Linn (DP), and 25 Apr at Diamond L Poweshiek (MPr).

**Chestnut-sided Warbler:** First: 7 May at Brookside P Story (SSP). Most: 10 on 15 May at Hickory Hill P Johnson (CRE). Late birds 29 May at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MPr), 30 May at Brinton Timber Washington (CRE, CJC), and 30 May at Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo

(RGo) could be nesting nearby.

**Magnolia Warbler:** First: 4 on 7 May at Brookside P Story (SSP) and 2 on 8 May at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MPr). Most: 6 on 14 May in Poweshiek (BVa). Last: 30 May in Washington (CRE).

**Cape May Warbler:** All: 14–15 May at Woodland Mounds Pres and L Ahquabi SP Warren (CJC, MPr, JJD, SSP, AJ, JB), 15 May at Iowa City Johnson (CRE, MCD), and 21 May in Floyd (PH, RGo).

**Yellow-rumped Warbler:** First: 7 Apr in Decatur (JRL). Most: 45 on 7 May at Coralville Res Johnson (CRE). Last: 21 May in Floyd (RGo).

**Black-throated Green Warbler:** First: 4 May at Macbride RA Johnson (DP). Most: 6 on 7 May at Brookside P Story (SSP) and 5 on 7 May at Macbride RA (CRE). Last: 31 May at Pine L SP Hardin (MPr).

**Blackburnian Warbler:** First: 7 May near Nevada Story and 3 on 7 May at Brookside P Story (HZ, SSP). Most: 8 on 15 May at Hickory Hill P Johnson (CRE). Last: 26 May at Burr Oak Winneshiek (DC).

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** Reported from nine counties south and east from Boone, except 23 Apr to 1 May at Pike's Peak SP Clayton (DAk). Five were in Van Buren 9 Apr (RLC) and one was a rarity 29 May at Brookside P Story (SSP).

**Pine Warbler:** Only one: 20 Apr at Pike's Peak SP Clayton (DAk\*).

**Palm Warbler:** First: 20 Apr at Cardinal M Winneshiek (FL). Like last year, the peak occurred on the last day reported: 12 on 15 May at Ada Hayden P Story (WO) and 8 on 15 May at Hickory Hill P Johnson (CRE).

**Bay-breasted Warbler:** First: 2 on 7 May at Brookside P Story (SSP). Last: 29 May at Grammer Grove WA Marshall (MPr).

**Blackpoll Warbler:** First: 30 Apr in *Decatur* (JRL), then not until 6 May at *Otter Cr P Warren* (JB). Most: 8 on 15 May at *L Ahquabi SP Warren* (SSP). Last: 30 May at *Lizard Cr WA Webster* (MHB).

**Cerulean Warbler:** First: 21 Apr at *Beam Woods Jones* (CRE) [third earliest]. There were reports of some healthy numbers: 6 on 16 May at *Macbride RA Johnson* (CJC), 5 on 18 May at *Pike's Peak SP Clayton* (DAk), 9 on 27–28 May at two locations around *Coralville Res Johnson* (CJC), 3 on 29 May at *Croton Unit Lee* (CJC), 6 on 30 May at *Brinton Timber Washington* (CJC, CRE), and 4 on 31 May at *L Ahquabi SP Warren* (JS).

**Black-and-white Warbler:** First: 5 on 5 May at *Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo* (RGo). Most: 11 on 7 May at *Brookside P Story* (SSP). Last: one was still at *Brinton Timber Washington* 30 May (CJC).

**American Redstart:** First reported 7 May from *Marshall* (MPr), *Story* (SSP), and *Coralville Res Johnson*, where 32 redstarts were counted (CRE).

**Prothonotary Warbler:** First: 16 Apr at *Cumming wetlands Warren* (JG-photo) [record earliest]. From the outer edge of their range: 14 May at *Kettleson Hogsback Dickinson* (LAS, ETh) and 16 May at *Whiterock NA Guthrie* (JJD).

**Worm-eating Warbler:** 1–3 were reported in May from *Croton* and *Donnellson Units Lee*.

**Ovenbird:** First: 4 on 24 Apr at *Woodland Mounds Pres Warren* (JG, JB). Most: 25 on 30 May at *Brinton Timber Washington* (CJC, CRE).

**Northern Waterthrush:** First: 4 May in *Johnson, Marshall, and Appanoose* (CRE, MPr, RLC). Most: 12 on 13 May at *Banner WA Warren* (AB). Last: 28 May at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO).

**Louisiana Waterthrush:** First: 2 on 9 Apr in *Van Buren* (RLC). One on territory 24 May at *Dolliver SP Webster* was at the NW corner of its Iowa range (SSP),

making one on 12 Apr at *Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo* an overshoot (RGo). Eleven were counted 29 May at *Croton Unit Lee* (CJC).

**Kentucky Warbler:** They were reported from eight SE counties, except for two possible nesters 27 May at *Stone SP Woodbury* (GLV). First: 5 May at *Nine Eagles SP Decatur* (SSP). Most: 9 on 30 May at *Brinton Timber Washington* (CRE).

**Connecticut Warbler:** All: 15 May at *Cumming wetlands Warren* (JG), 19 May at *Two Waters WA Worth* (PH), 20 May at *Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo* (RGo), and 21 May at *Squaw Cr P Linn* (DLF).

**Mourning Warbler:** First: 9 May at *Pilot Knob SP Hancock* (CJF, RGo). Most: 6 on 30 May at *Grammer Grove WA Marshall* (MPr). Two more were still at *Lizard Cr WA Webster* 30 May (MHB).

**Common Yellowthroat:** First: 21 Apr in *Jefferson* (DiP-details) [ties record earliest].

**Hooded Warbler:** The first nesters were found 6 May at *L Ahquabi SP Warren* (JB) and 7 May at *Donnellson Unit Lee* (THK, JLF, RIC). Overshoots stopped 7 May at *Brookside P Story* (SSP), 9 May at *Pilot Knob SP Hancock* (PH), and one was still present at *Grammer Grove WA Marshall* 25–30 May (MPr).

**Wilson's Warbler:** First: 2 May at *Brookside P Story* (SSP). Few were seen until the last: 30 May at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO).

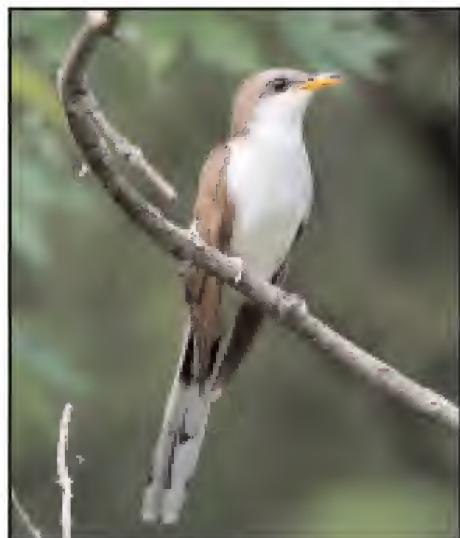
**Canada Warbler:** First: 13 May at *West Des Moines Polk* (JB), followed by 14 May in both *Decatur* (JRL) and *Lucas* (DAk). Most: 4 on 20 May at *Decorah Winneshiek* (DC). Last: 30 May at *Ada Hayden P Story* (WO) and 3 on 30 May at *Parker's Woods Cerro Gordo* (RGo).

## IOU 2005 Photography Contest Winners

IOU is pleased to present the spring 2005 Photography Contest winners. There were 21 excellent entries that challenged judges Linda Bender, an art director and wildlife lover; Ann Johnson, secretary of the IOU Records Committee; and Ty Smedes, a professional photographer. Rules state that difficulty of photographing is a high criterion; therefore, the moving target birds captured the judges attention.



First Place Winner: Cedar Waxwing, Mason City, Cerro Gordo, 11 July 2004. Photograph by Tim McKone, Mason City, IA.



Second Place Winner: Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Beaver Bottoms, Dallas, 20 May 2004. Photograph by Dick Stilwell, West Des Moines, IA.



Honorable Mention: Eastern Kingbird, prairie, Franklin, 8 July 2004. Photograph by Tim McKone, Mason City, IA.



Third Place Winner: Yellow-throated Vireo,  
Pinchey Bottoms, Marion, 28 August 2004.  
Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Honorable Mention: Northern Saw-whet  
Owl, Lime Creek Nature Center, Cerro  
Gordo, 22 December 2004. Photograph by  
Harsha Jayawardena, Mason City, IA.



Honorable Mention: Northern Hawk Owl,  
Manly, Winnebago, 19 February 2005.  
Photograph by Harsha Jayawardena, Mason  
City, IA.



Honorable Mention: Blue-gray Gnatcatcher,  
Beaver Bottoms, Dallas, 16 April 2005.  
Photograph by Dick Stilwell, West Des  
Moines, IA

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Most sightings were from Croton and Donnellson Units *Lee*. Others were found 8 and 10 May in *Johnson* (ABW, CRE), 20 May at Saylorville Res *Polk* (DK), 23 May in *Henry* (RIA, PHA), 23 May at Coon Cr WA *Winneshiek* (DK), and 2 on 30 May in *Jefferson* (DiP).

**Summer Tanager:** First: 7 May at both hanging Rock Woods *Johnson* (MCD, BSc) and in *Dubuque* (CLW). Reported in the north 10 May at Maynes Grove P *Franklin* (TSS), 12 May at Hartman Reserve *Black Hawk* (KN), and at Carolyn Fischer's home in Mason City *Cerro Gordo* 11–18 May (m.ob.). Late May residents were found up the Missouri R drainage from Waubonsie SP *Fremont* (CRE) to Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (MOr) to Preparation Canyon *Monona* (GLV). An early report was referred to the Records Committee.

**Scarlet Tanager:** First: 4 May at Liscomb Marshall (MPr).

**WESTERN TANAGER:** Two male birds visited this spring: 11–16 May at Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (CJF\*, PH\*, DAk\*) and 15 May at Hickory Hill P *Johnson* (CRE, MCD). Carolyn Fischer hit the “Tanager Trifecta” at her home 13 May with Scarlet, Summer, and Western all present (CJF-photo of Summer and Western together, see p. 153).

**Spotted Towhee:** All: 3 May at Hitchcock NA *Pottawattamie* (MOr), 5 May at West Des Moines *Polk* (RSS), 14 May at Bacon Cr P *Woodbury* (GLV), and 25 May at Hitchcock NA (MOr) [second latest].

**Eastern Towhee:** First: 2 Mar in *Decatur* (JRL) was probably a lingering winterer, but 3 on 21 Mar in *Jefferson* were migrants (DiP). Most: 16 on 9 Apr in *Van Buren* (RLC).

**American Tree Sparrow:** 12 on 26 Mar at Myre Sl *Winnebago* were the last reported (JB).

**Chipping Sparrow:** First: 1 Apr in *Jefferson* (DiP) and 6 Apr at L Meyer *Winneshiek* (Larry Reis fide DC).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** First: 4 May at Wildin Pr *Kossuth* (MCK) and 5 May at Parker's Woods *Cerro Gordo* (RGo). Most: 8 on 11 May at Algona *Kossuth* (MCK). Last: 15 May in *Monroe* (JJD).

**Field Sparrow:** First: 3 on 2 Apr at Ames Story (SSP).

**Vesper Sparrow:** First: 31 Mar in *Hardin* (SSP) and 1 Apr at Cone M *Louisa* (DP).

**Lark Sparrow:** First: 14 Apr in *Decatur* (JLF). Most: 15 on 21 Apr at Sedan Bottoms *Appanoose* (RLC).

**LARK BUNTING:** Three males were found 7 May at Gitchie Manitou NA *Lyon* (DEC\*).

**Savannah Sparrow:** Most and the first reported: 40 on 13 Apr at Dean *Appanoose* (RLC).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** First: 21 Apr in *Johnson* (CRE).

**Henslow's Sparrow:** First: in *Ringgold* (JLF) and 3 in *Van Buren* (RLC), both on 9 Apr [third earliest], and 11 Apr in *Decatur* (JRL). Henslow's were found in fifteen additional counties including *Hamilton*, *Kossuth*, *Bremer*, *Boone*, *Hancock*, and *Floyd* in the north (SSP, MCK, KJ, JJD, PH, RGo, PH).

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** All: 2 on 5 May in *Kossuth* (MCK) and 6 May at Lacey-Keosauqua SP *Van Buren* (JLF).

**Nelson's Sharp-tailed Sparrow:** 2–4 birds were found 20–28 May at Doolittle Pr *Story* (SSP-details).

**Fox Sparrow:** First: 8 Mar in *Allamakee* (FL). The peak occurred 17–29 Mar, with 6 birds reported each from *Pottawattamie*, *Warren*, *Marshall*, and *Johnson* (BE, JG, MPr, CRE).

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** First: 21 Apr in *Jefferson* (DiP). Most: 10 on 7 May at Brookside P *Story* (SSP). Last: 21 May at Squaw Cr P *Linn* (DLF).

**White-throated Sparrow:** First: 2 on 12 Apr at Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (RGo). Last: 2 on 16 May at Croton Unit *Lee* (CRE).

**Harris's Sparrow:** There were few reports of only 1–3 birds and only one on 3 Apr at Mason City *Cerro Gordo* (RGo) was before the first week of May.

**White-crowned Sparrow:** Similar to Harris's, White-crowned didn't arrive until the first week of May, but the most reported were 9 in *Appanoose* (RLC), 12 at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* (CRE), and 6 in *Story* (MPr), all on 7 May.

**Dark-eyed Junco:** There were no May reports.

**Lapland Longspur:** High counts of 2,000 on 19 Mar at *Owego Wetlands Woodbury* (GLV) dropped to 200 on 31 Mar at *Hanlontown M Worth* (RGo) and 200 on 3 Apr in *Johnson* (CJC, CRE), with the last single on 24 Apr in *Kossuth* (MCK).

**Smith's Longspur:** All: 20–40 birds were reported 10–16 Apr at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* (JG-photo, CJC, DP, CRE, JLF, THK), 5 on 13 Apr at *Union Hills BCA Cerro Gordo* (RGo-details); late birds at *Hawkeye WA* dwindled from 30 on 5 May (JLF, THK) to 15 on 7 May (BSc-details, MCD-details) [ties second latest] to the final 3 on 8 May (CRE) [record latest].

**Snow Bunting:** Only report: 12 on 23 Mar at *Saylorville Res Polk* (DK).

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak:** First: 29 Apr in *Decatur* (JRL).

**BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK:** A male was found 25 May at *Hitchcock NA Pottawattamie* (MOr\*).

**Blue Grosbeak:** Reported only from *Pottawattamie* (MOr, LJP, BKP) and *Carroll* (MTh).

**LAZULI BUNTING:** There were two reports of this species that is probably regular in western Iowa: a male 10–13 May at *Hitchcock NA Pottawattamie* was found dead and is now a specimen at ISU and

another 19 May at a feeder in *Sibley Fremont* (Carl Priebe fide Ross Silcock-details).

**Indigo Bunting:** First: a male visited a feeder in *Algona Kossuth* 23 Apr to 3 May (MCK) [ties second earliest]. The next wasn't until 5 May in *Jefferson* (DiP).

**Dickcissel:** First: 6 May at *Woodland Mounds Pres Warren* (JB), followed by 7 May at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* (DP, CJC) and 3 on 7 May in *Appanoose* (RLC).

**Bobolink:** First: 30 Apr in *Decatur* (JRL) and 6 May at *Rolling Thunder Pr Warren* (JB).

**Yellow-headed Blackbird:** First: 8 Apr at both *Otter Cr M Tama* (DP) and *Union Hills BCA Cerro Gordo* (RGo).

**Rusty Blackbird:** Most: 70 on 21 Mar in *Warren* (JG) and 80 on 2 Apr at *Bussey L Clayton* (DAk).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** All: 10 on 22 Mar in *Butler* (RGo), 12 on 2 Apr at *Two Waters WA Worth* (RGo), 3 on 2 Apr at *Hanlontown M Worth* (PH), 70 on 3 Apr in *Louisa* (CRE, CJC, DP), 40 on 7 Apr at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* (JLF), 12 on 24 Apr at *Bauer Sl Hamilton* (SSP-details), and 2 on 30 Apr at *Sandpiper RA Polk* (DTh-details).

**Great-tailed Grackle:** Most: 120 coming in to roost the evening of 14 May at *Banner WA Warren* (DAk). They were also reported from *Tama*, *Woodbury*, *Calhoun*, *Hancock*, *Decatur*, *Greene*, *Clinton*, and *Fremont*. One on 21 May in *Floyd* was a new county record (PH).

**Orchard Oriole:** First: a male 20 Apr at *Hawkeye WA Johnson* (CRE-details) [record earliest].

**Baltimore Oriole:** First: 3 on 29 Apr at *Lacey-Keosauqua SP Van Buren* (JLF). Most: 14 around the feeders at the same time 14 May in *Poweshiek* (BVA).

**Purple Finch:** Most: 10 on 10 Apr at *Dean Appanoose* (RLC), 9 on 21 Apr at *Cedar Rapids Linn* (DLF), and 12 on 3 May at *A.A. Call SP Kossuth* (MCK).

**House Finch:** Danny counted 120 on 19 Mar at Garnavillo *Clayton* (DAk).

**Red Crossbill:** The wintering pair of crossbills at Thorpe P *Winnebago* remained until 3 Mar (LSR).

**Common Redpoll:** A few stragglers remained in northern Iowa into March: 1–3 were found at Manly *Worth* (ETh), Garnavillo *Clayton* (DAk), Lost Island L *Palo Alto* (PEL), and 13–19 Mar at Sioux City *Woodbury* (GLV).

**Pine Siskin:** Most: 16 on 19 Mar at Garnavillo *Clayton* (DAk) and 25 on 26 Mar at Hoffman Pr *Cerro Gordo* (RGo). Siskins lingered into May: 2 on 16 May in *Cerro Gordo* (RGo), 18 May at *Garnavillo* (DAk), 25 May at Sioux City *Woodbury* (GLV), 29 May at Cedar Rapids *Linn* (BSc), and 31 May at Cardinal M *Winneshiek* (EB).

**Eurasian Tree Sparrow:** Reported from Muscatine, Johnson, and Louisa (RIA, PHA, CRE).

## CONTRIBUTORS

Danny Akers	DAK	Garnavillo	Fred Lesher	FL	La Crosse, WI
Reid Allen	RIA	West Des Moines	Jeff Livingston	JRL	Davis City
Pam Allen	PHA	West Des Moines	Dan Mehner	DWM	Gilbertville
Ellen Bell	EB	Ridgeway	Miro Merfeld*		Hudson
John Bissell	JB	Grimes	Joe Monahan*		Ames
John Bollenbacher	JPB	Iowa City	Bruce Morrison*		Hartley
Aaron Brees	AB	Des Moines	Kent Nickell	KN	Waterloo
Alan Brown	AIB	Cedar Falls	Bob Norris	BN	Des Moines
Mark Brown	MHB	Iowa City	Wolf Oesterreich	WO	Ames
David Bunkofske*		Burt	Mark Orsag	MOr	Crete, NE
Dennis Carter	DC	Decorah	Loren Padelford	LJP	Bellevue, NE
Chris Caster	CJC	Coralville	Babs Padelford	BJP	Bellevue, NE
Bob Cecil	RIC	Des Moines	Shane Patterson	SSP	Ames
Doug Chapman*	DEC	Sioux Falls, SD	Diana Pesek	DP	Fairfield
Ray Cummins	RLC	Centerville	Don Poggensee	DoP	Ida Grove
Jack Curran*		Bella Vista, AR	Diane Porter	DiP	Fairfield
Mary De La Garza*		Iowa City	Mark Proescholdt	MPr	Liscomb
James J. Dinsmore	JJD	Ames	Beth Proescholdt	BPr	Liscomb
Stephen J. Dinsmore	SJD	Ames	Lisa Ralls	LSR	Forest City
Mike Dooley	MCD	Iowa City	Paul Roisen	POR	Sioux City
Chris Edwards	CRE	North Liberty	John Rutenbeck*	JWR	Burlington
Bery Engebretsen	BE	Urbandale	Bill Scheible	BSc	Cedar Rapids
Carolyn J. Fischer	CJF	Mason City	Tom Schilke	TSS	Waterloo
Stephanie Flater	SF	Long Grove	Lee Schoenewe	LAS	Spencer
Steve Freed	SMF	Moline, IL	Jim Sinclair	JS	Indianola
James L. Fuller	JLF	Iowa City	Tracy Spry*		Knoxville
Dale Fye	DLF	Cedar Rapids	Dick & Sharon Stilwell	RSS	Des Moines
Jay Gilliam	JG	Norwalk	Jon Strong		Omaha
Rita Goranson	RGo	Mason City	Ed Thelen	ETh	Spirit Lake
Doug Haar	DCH	Ogden	Marty Thelen	MTh	Breda
Paul Hertzel	PH	Mason City	Rob Thelen	RTh	Carroll
Bill Huser	BFH	Sioux City	Denny Thompson	DTh	Johnston
Marshall Iliff*		Costa Mesa, CA	Richard Trieff	RTr	Indianola
Ann Johnson	AJ	Norwalk	Bob Van Ersvelde	BVa	Grinnell
Linda Johnson	LAD	Fort Madison	Paul Van Nieuwenhuyse	PVN	Dewitt
Mike Johnston	MWJ	Waterloo	Jerry Von Ehwegen	GLV	Sioux City
Matt Kenne	MCK	Algona	Anne Wallis	ABW	Iowa City
Thomas H. Kent	THK	Iowa City	Matt Wetrich*	MTW	Fairfield
Clem Klapchake	CNK	Bellevue, NE	Charlie Winterwood	CLW	Dubuque
Darwin Koenig	DK	Ankeny	Hank Zaletel	HZ	Nevada
Paul Lehman	PEL	Cape May, NJ			

## COMMENT

Many thanks to everyone who used the online system for contributing their spring birding observations! This feature enabled me to go on vacation with my family after school got out in early June without the worry of long hours of data entry waiting for me when I got home.

709 N. Phillips, Algona, IA 50511-1747 (mkenne@netamumail.com)



American Bittern, Colo Ponds, Story, 30 April 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Yellow-breasted Chat, Croton Unit of Shimek State Forest, Lee, 21 May 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks near Alden, Hardin, 19 April 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Upland Sandpiper near Sedan Bottoms,  
Appanoose, 22 May 2005. Photograph by  
Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



This Vermilion Flycatcher was an unexpected spring arrival at Whiterock Conservancy,  
Guthrie, 18 May 2005. Photograph by Jay  
Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Black-necked Stilt, McIntosh Woods, Cerro  
Gordo, 25 May 2005. Photograph by John  
Morrison, Austin, MN.



Hooded Warbler, Donnellson Unit of Shimek  
State Forest, Lee, 21 May 2005. Photograph  
by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Kentucky Warbler, Croton Unit of Shimek State Forest, Lee, 21 May 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Little Blue Heron, Bauer Slough, Hamilton, 24 April 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Record early Prothonotary Warbler, Cumming wetlands, Warren, 16 April 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Red-necked Grebe, Otter Creek Marsh, Tama, 23 April 2005. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

# Records Committee Report for 2004

Ann M. Johnson

The Records Committee had a very busy year; 70 reports, including one old report from 1874, were reviewed. Of the 69 reports for 2004, 51 were accepted and 18 were not. The AOU split Canada Goose, which added Cackling Goose to the state list (# 408). Other additions in 2004 were Baird's Sparrow (# 409) and Boreal Owl (# 410).

Committee members for 2004, with years in which their terms expire, were Jim Sinclair (2004), Thomas H. Kent (2005), Lee Schoenewe (2006), James J. Dinsmore (2007), Aaron Brees (2008), Matt Kenne (2009), and Ann M. Johnson (secretary, appointed by the committee). Paul Hertzel (2010) was nominated by the committee and appointed by the Board of Directors to fill a regular term beginning in 2005. Thomas H. Kent resigned at the conclusion of 2004 and Mike Overton (2005) was nominated and appointed to fill the final year of Kent's term.

The majority of reports were submitted on-line through the IOU website. The ease of doing this no doubt contributed to the increase in reports, and the committee is gratified to have more people reporting. Even reports that are not accepted become a permanent part of the archives of Iowa birds and could be important to future researchers.

The four-digit number (year and sequence number) assigned to each record reviewed by the Records Committee is included for future reference. Records are classified as follows: A = Accepted (-S = specimen, -P = photograph, -R = recording, -D = documentation) and NA = Not Accepted. To be Accepted, a record must receive seven votes on the initial review or six votes on a subsequent review. The subcategories A-S, A-P, and A-R indicate that physical evidence supports the identification, and records are subclassified based on a majority vote. References to IBL are the page of the field reports in *Iowa Bird Life* where the record is cited. P- numbers refer to the IOU Photo File entry number. Published notes and previous citations may contain more details. An \* indicates a previously uncited documentation. Counties are italicized.

## 2004 RECORDS ACCEPTED

**Harlequin Duck:** 12 to 13 Jan at Saylorville Res Polk (04-03, *IBL* 74:40, 42 [Brees 2005]) and 29 Feb to 6 Mar at Pool 15 Scott (04-10, P-1024, *IBL* 74:40, 42).

**Red-necked Grebe:** 24 Nov at L Manawa Pottawattamie (04-49, *IBL* 75:9).

**Neotropic Cormorant:** 19 to 20 Nov at Saylorville Res Polk (04-47, P-1035, *IBL* 75:7, 10).

**Swallow-tailed Kite:** 3 to 4 Jun at Iowa City Johnson (04-31, P-1033, *IBL* 74:137, 140, cover [Scheib 2004]).

**Ferruginous Hawk:** 19 Sep and 23 Nov at Hitchcock NA Pottawatamie (04-40, *IBL* 75:7, 11 \*Jerry Toll and 04-48, *IBL* 75:7, 11 \*Mark Orsag).

**Black Rail:** 4 May at Davis City Decatur (04-18, *IBL* 74:93, 97 \*Jeff Livingston).

**King Rail:** 11 to 16 May at Hawkeye WA Johnson (04-21, P-1027, *IBL* 74:93, 97 [Dick and Huntington 2005]).

**Snowy Plover:** 8 May at Hawkeye WA Johnson (04-20, *IBL* 74:93, 97 [Fuller and Kent 2005]).

**Whimbrel:** 17 May at Jester Park Polk (04-22, IBL 74:93, 98) and 28 May Hancock (04-35, IBL 74:93, 98).

**Red Knot:** 1 Aug at Coralville Res Johnson (04-37, IBL 75:7, 13) and 26 Aug at Hawkeye WA Johnson (04-65, IBL 75:7, 13 \*Chris Edwards).

**Laughing Gull:** 5 May at Credit Island Scott (04-19, IBL 74:99 \*Dan Dorrance).

**California Gull:** 12 Dec at Saylorville Res Polk (04-61, P-1036, IBL 75:61, 65, 70 \*Aaron Brees, Jay Gilliam)

**Iceland Gull:** 8 to 12 Feb at Davenport Scott (04-66, P-1038, IBL 75:61, 65); 10 Feb at Davenport Scott (04-67, IBL 75:61, 65); 29 Feb at Davenport Scott (04-68, IBL 75:61, 65); and 28 Mar at Jester Park Polk (04-12, IBL 74:93, 100).

**Great Black-backed Gull:** 22 Feb at Lock & Dam 14 Scott (04-07, IBL 74:40, 45) and 29 Dec at Pool 15 Scott (04-69, IBL 75:65).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** 27 Oct at Saylorville Res Polk (04-56, IBL 75:7, 15); 20 Dec at Keokuk Lee (04-62, IBL 75:61, 65, 78, 90 \*Mike Overton); 26 to 27 Dec at Red Rock Res Marion (04-63, P-1037, IBL 75:61, 65); and 30 Dec at Lock & Dam 14 Scott (04-64, IBL 75:61, 65).

**White-winged Dove:** 28 Jun at Ottosen Humboldt (04-33, IBL 74:137, 144) and 29 Jun at Liscomb Marshall (04-30, IBL 74:137, 144).

**Groove-billed Ani:** 20 to 24 Oct near Ottumwa Wapello (04-45, IBL 75:7, 16).

**Burrowing Owl:** 26 to 31 Mar Kossuth (04-29, P-1032, IBL 74:93, 100).

**Boreal Owl:** 12 Nov at George Wyth SP Black Hawk (04-52, P-1039, IBL 75:7, 16; 75:93, 94, cover [Garrett 2005]).

**Scissor-tailed Flycatcher:** 4 Apr north of Fayette Fayette (04-44).

**Mountain Bluebird:** 28 Feb at Black Hawk Co. Park Black Hawk (04-09, IBL 74:40, 46).

**Townsend's Solitaire:** 10 Sep at Hitchcock NA Pottawattamie (04-53, IBL 75:7, 18); 12 Sep at Little Sioux Access Clay (04-54, IBL 75:7, 18); and 24 Oct at Trumbull L Clay (04-55, IBL 75:7, 18).

**Swainson's Thrush:** 18 Apr at Coralville Johnson (04-15, P-1025, IBL 74:103).

**Sprague's Pipit:** 5 May at Eagle L Hancock (04-25, IBL 74:93, 103 \*Rita Goranson [Goranson 2005]).

**Bohemian Waxwing:** 6 to 7 Jan at Lime Creek NC Cerro Gordo (04-01, IBL 74:40, 46); 13 Nov at Sheldon O'Brien (04-57, IBL 75:19); 21 Nov at Marble Beach SP Dickinson (04-58, IBL 75:19); 26 to 28 Nov at Milford Dickinson (04-59, IBL 75:19); and 6 Dec at Spirit Lake Dickinson (04-60, IBL 75:61, 67).

**Pine Warbler:** 5 to 10 Jul at Shimek SF Lee (04-34, IBL 74:137, 146).

**Western Tanager:** 29 Apr to 1 May at Algona Kossuth (04-16, P-1026, IBL 74: 93).

**Baird's Sparrow:** 4 Jun Cherokee (04-32, IBL 74:137, 142).

**Golden-crowned Sparrow:** 24 Jan to 15 Feb at Lake Meyer NC Winneshiek (04-05, P-1023, IBL 74:40, 47).

**Black-headed Grosbeak:** 1 May at Iowa City Johnson (04-17, IBL 74:93, 106 \*John Bollenbacher [Bollenbacher 2005]).

**Lazuli Bunting:** 18 May at Westfield Plymouth (04-24, P-1028, IBL 74:93, 106); 19 to 26 May at Spirit Lake Dickinson (04-27, P-1030, IBL 74:93, 106); and 28 to 29 May at Spirit Lake Dickinson (04-28, P-1031, IBL 74:93, 106).

## 2004 RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED

**Whooper Swan:** Because swans have a long life, another Midwestern report of this species was presumed one of the escapees from Illinois several years ago (04-04, *IBL* 74:40, 41).

**Eurasian Wigeon:** This was a difficult report for the committee. Although multiple observers saw the bird, only one provided a brief description. Members thought that the identification was no doubt correct but the brevity of the description with no corroborating descriptions could not stand the test of time (04-11, *IBL* 74:93, 94).

**Sharp-tailed Grouse:** A report accompanied by a photo was not in doubt as to species but was certainly a part of the reintroduction in western Iowa. More reports of this species will be helpful to determine if a population becomes established (04-02, P-1029, *IBL* 74:95).

**Gyrfalcon:** This species is always difficult to evaluate because the best description has few concrete identifying details. Because the bird was seen for such a brief time as a fly-by at the hawk watch, the committee took a conservative view with a split vote (04-51, *IBL* 75:7, 12, 39).

**Black Rail:** With a split vote, the committee was reluctant to accept a report of a bird where the observer was not totally confident in his identification (04-42).

**Red Knot:** In an unusual twist, a photograph did not support the written description and was thought to be a Stilt Sandpiper (04-43, P-1034, *IBL* 75:7, 13).

**Ruff:** On a split vote, this report was problematic because of the self-doubt of the reporter and lack of a description by the second observer (04-38). Multiple reports give the committee better information to evaluate.

**Parasitic Jaeger:** Less than optimal viewing conditions left the committee with a sketchy description that was hard to evaluate. Most thought that jaeger sp. was correct but could not be sure beyond that (04-46, *IBL* 75:7, 14).

**Iceland Gull:** The description was suggestive, but a few critical pieces of information were missing to be certain that this was not a washed out Thayer's Gull (04-26, *IBL* 74:93, 100).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** Viewing conditions and a few missing details made the committee reluctant to accept a sighting of an adult bird. Records from the interior of the country are primarily juveniles (04-41, *IBL* 75:7, 15).

**Gray Flycatcher:** Behavioral description was very suggestive of this species but several morphological characteristics were missing in the documentation. A silent *Empidonax* flycatcher without other compelling evidence created too much doubt to add this one to the state list (04-39, *IBL* 75:7, 17).

**Common Raven:** A flying bird observed by a person in a moving vehicle was suggestive but could not convince the committee that it had moved beyond reasonable doubt. Large crows in the wind can be problematic unless one sees a combination of characters (04-08, *IBL* 74:40, 45).

**Dark-eyed Junco:** Two reports submitted as the "Pink-sided" subspecies generated some interesting discussion with the conclusion that sight reports of this difficult-to-identify form warranted not-accepted classifications at this time (04-13 and 04-36, *IBL* 74:106).

**McKay's Bunting:** An interesting video was provided of a bird with black and white patterns. While there were superficial similarities to this species, some characteristics did not match up correctly. Because it was feeding with House Sparrows, the best guess was that it was a very abnormally colored House Sparrow (04-50, P-1040, *IBL* 75:7, 22).

**Black-headed Grosbeak:** Because there was no description of the bill, the committee thought that Spotted Towhee could not be eliminated by the description (04-23, *IBL* 74:106).

**Lazuli Bunting:** While parts of the description were suggestive of this species, some details were not consistent and left the committee with reasonable doubt (04-14, *IBL* 74:93, 106).

**Hoary Redpoll:** This report received a split vote but several members thought that because the best identifying characteristic, the undertail coverts, were not seen it was best to be conservative (04-06, *IBL* 74:40, 48).

#### OLD RECORDS REVIEWED FOR THE FIRST TIME AND NOT ACCEPTED

**Eskimo Curlew:** An 1874 newspaper clipping from Omaha described a hunt in Pottawattamie Co. where this species was taken, but no description of the bird made evaluation of the identification impossible (04-AA).

#### LITERATURE CITED

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5362 120th Ave., Norwalk, IA 50211-9149 (aj@hologrambirds.com)

# Nesting King Rails in Warren County

*Jay Gilliam*

On the evening of 10 May 2005, I stopped at the Cumming wetlands as I usually do on my way home from work. I parked along the road and glassed the water to look for birds but there were not many to be found. Besides the many singing bullfrogs and Red-winged Blackbirds, I heard a Virginia Rail way off in the distance. Closer to the road I heard a “kek-kek-kek” call but it did not register in my mind at the time so I drove down the road. I made it about a half-mile before it dawned on me that I might have been hearing a King Rail. The only other experience I have had with the King Rail was the one that was found at Hawkeye Wildlife Area in May 2004 (Dick and Huntington 2005) and this call reminded me of that bird. I quickly turned around and drove back and closely listened to the nonstop “kek-kek-kek” while trying to get my CD player in my truck to work so I could play the King Rail call and compare it. Unfortunately, the CD player in my truck decided to stop working at that moment so I called John Bissell and he played the King Rail calls over the phone. I was confident that there was a King Rail at the wetlands but it was too dark to look for it.

The next morning I got my CD player to work so I stopped by the wetlands on my way to work and played it while parked on the road again. Within minutes a King Rail came running through the grass towards the road to find the “other” King Rail that was calling. It was a large rail with a long, slightly down-curved bill that was darker on the upper and orangish on the lower bill. It was dark gray on top of the head and had a light superciliary line. The throat was white and the front of its neck, breast, and upper belly were orange-rufous in color. The upper parts were dark brown with some patterning. The flanks were dark, almost black, with light vertical barring. It had a short tail that flashed white as it held it stiff and upright.

I called several birders that day and met Jim Sinclair there after work. We both saw the rail again as it was running around the small pond near the road. We were thrilled about the rail’s presence because the Cumming wetlands area was going to be my area to lead a field trip at the spring IOU meeting the following weekend. If the rail did not leave, there would be an opportunity for a lot of birders to observe it while participating in the IOU field trips.

The spring IOU meeting was held at Wesley Woods near Indianola on 14–15 May 2005 and I led two large groups of birders to the Cumming wetlands in search of the King Rail and other birds. We started off the first day by seeing a Least Bittern at the small pond near the road where I had seen the rail, but the rail was calling from further down the shoreline of the larger pond. The rail was very cooperative on both days and responded aggressively to the tape I played. Everybody had great looks at this bird as it walked right past the group calling “kek-kek-kek.” On the second day, we stood very still as it walked within fifteen feet of some of the birders. Needless to say, the birders were thrilled with this great sighting. Also on the second day, we were walking back to the cars after seeing the King Rail and we decided to stop to look closely for the Least Bittern at the small pond. Mark Proescholdt walked around the edge of the pond while we all looked on from a distance. Mark flushed a Sora and then a larger bird that we assumed was the Least Bittern. Paul Roisen happened to get a photo of it in flight so we looked at the image on

the back of his camera. The bird in the image looked too rufous-colored to be a Least Bittern so we assumed it was a Virginia Rail (because the chances of finding two King Rails at the same location seemed pretty minimal). Paul e-mailed me the photo the following week and after viewing it on the computer screen I determined it was indeed another King Rail!

The fact that it flushed from the small pond, along with most of my other sightings from that same area, led me to believe the rails might possibly be attempting to nest in that area. I did observe both rails after that on one other occasion. I sent a message to the IA-BIRDS listserv requesting that birders not play tapes when searching for the rails because I did not want to discourage them from nesting attempts. I stopped by the wetlands several times over the next six weeks and just parked on the road to listen for them calling. They continued to call until about the end of June and then I did not hear them on my stops after that. I was worried they had left the area but still hoped that perhaps they were nesting and keeping a low profile.

It was the first week of July before I decided to go in and search for the rails. I thought if they had nested successfully their eggs should have hatched by then. So on 2 July, Kelly Weichers and I ventured into the wetlands in search of the rails. We thoroughly searched the small pond near the road and Kelly observed a King Rail but it disappeared into the tall grasses. We searched the shoreline of the larger area but were unsuccessful so we headed back to the small pond. We again found a King Rail that walked away from the small pond and seemed like it was trying to lead me away from the area. I followed it until we were near the larger area and it did a U-turn and ran back to the small pond. I was ready to give up the search and walk back to the car but Kelly thought she would

wait and watch the area for rails as I walked around the pond. When I neared the edge of the small pond I noticed a King Rail on the other side and with it were three little black balls of fuzz. I excitedly got Kelly's attention and said "Babies, babies!!" She came over to where I was standing and we watched eight King Rail chicks slowly emerge from the grass to be fed by both of the parents (Figure 1). The tiny chicks eventually disappeared into the grass as they followed the parents around the edge of the pond.

King Rail chicks are precocial and leave the nest within one hour of hatching. They remain near the nest site for the first day and are fed by the parents. After the first day, the parents move them to a feeding area away from the nest site (Meanley 1992). Based on this and the fact that they were so small (maybe 3 inches tall) led me to assume they had hatched the morning we were there.

I, and other birders, checked on the rails over the next several weeks. On 9 July, Jim Sinclair and Aaron Brees observed six chicks and one adult in an area along the shore of the larger body of water. On 16 July, I observed both adults and 5 chicks in the



Figure 1. King Rail parent with 1-day old chicks, 2 July 2005. Cumming wetlands, Warren Co. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

same area (Figure 2). On 23 July, I observed and heard one adult but did not locate the other adult or chicks. On 14 August, I observed a fully-feathered six-week old juvenile (Figure 3). It takes 8 to 10 weeks from the time of hatching for the juveniles to be able to fly. Hopefully there were more chicks that survived and the King Rails will return next spring to nest again.

Kent and Dinsmore (1996) note the King Rail as "Regular; nests" and occurs as a rare migrant and summer resident. The King Rail sighting at Hawkeye Wildlife Area last summer was the first reported since 1999. The last report of nesting King Rails was in Des Moines County in 1996.

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1004 Meadow Drive, Norwalk, IA 50211-1216  
(jacobtee@aol.com)



Figure 2. King Rail parent with 14-day old chicks, 16 July 2005. Cumming wetlands, Warren Co. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.



Figure 3. King Rail juvenile at six weeks, 14 August 2005. Cumming wetlands, Warren Co. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

# Red-breasted Nuthatches Nest in Carroll

Shirley Schirck

A pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches successfully raised three fledglings in our backyard during spring 2005 (Figures 1–3).

Toward the end of October, three Red-breasted Nuthatches appeared at feeders in our backyard and returned almost daily throughout the winter. They were feasting on beef-kidney suet, safflower and sunflower seed, and raw Spanish peanuts, as well as using our heated bird bath.

In April, I noticed the two males courting the female and chasing away chickadees and White-breasted Nuthatches from the yard. On 3 April, I saw the birds excavating a southeasterly facing cavity in a dead portion of a corkscrew willow tree approximately 13 feet high. The trunk diameter was approximately 5 inches. They made countless trips into and out of the cavity dumping beaks full of “sawdust” into the wind after cautiously glancing all around. The tree grows beside a little artificial pond with an electric fountain beside it. Nearby are several feeders as well as plenty of perches and bird baths.

On 19 April, I observed both males guarding the nest site. By 1 May, there appeared to be only one male and one female. They made trips from a neighbor’s pine trees carrying pine pitch, which they proceeded to smear around the entrance hole.

I observed the male feeding the female on the nest on 4 May. She appeared at the entrance hole to accept the food.

On 16 May, Rita Efta banded the male and female. They were busily feeding insects, suet, and nuts to nestlings, as well as taking fecal sacs from the nest cavity. In a 30-minute period, I observed the pair make 17 trips to the nest cavity with food.

On 24 May, fledglings appeared at the entrance hole to receive food. I found one young bird dead on the ground beneath the tree.

By 27 May, the young were poking their heads out farther to get food from the parents. They left the nest on 30 May and Stanley Buman was present to photograph them. Both parents continued feeding the three fledglings and one parent pecked at my finger as I held out a handful of peanuts for him/her to take. On 10 June, a fledgling successfully clung to the peanut feeder to feed. Another fledgling was at the suet feeder gorging itself. On 20 June, I received a call from a birder who lives six blocks from me; she said three young Red-breasted Nuthatches were in her yard feeding at suet and seed feeders hanging in her locust trees. I went to her yard on 25 June and saw all three fledglings



Figure 1. Male Red-breasted Nuthatch excavating nest cavity in Schirck yard on 5 April 2005. Photograph by Stanley Buman, Carroll, IA.

happily feeding and chattering to each other. I was elated to see that they were still together and doing well.

The House Wrens were late in coming this spring and I think that was a key factor in the successful nesting attempt of the nuthatches. In 2003, a pair of Red-breasted Nuthatches excavated a cavity in another branch of the same corkscrew willow tree, but they were driven away by the arrival of the House Wrens that spring. As of 27 June 2005, I no longer saw the parents in my yard.

There is one previous confirmed report of Red-breasted Nuthatches nesting in Des Moines (Kent and Dinsmore 1996) and one report of an abandoned Red-breasted Nuthatch nest in Jester Park, Polk County (Kenne 2004).

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228 West 21st, Carroll, IA 51401



Figure 2. Female Red-breasted Nuthatch banded by Rita Efta in Schirck yard on 16 May 2005. Photograph by Zola Beckman, rural Lake City, IA.



Figure 3. Fledgling Red-breasted Nuthatch below nest site in Schirck yard on fledging day, 30 May 2005. Photograph by Stanley Buman, Carroll, IA.

# Neotropic Cormorant at Saylorville Reservoir

Aaron Brees

On Friday, 19 November 2004, I made a trip to Saylorville Reservoir in Polk County. My first stop was the top of the dam, where I could see a number of birds congregated at Lakeview Recreation Area near the west end of the dam. At Lakeview, a long, rock jetty projects out into the lake. This jetty often provides a protected resting area for birds, and pelicans, cormorants, terns, and gulls can often be found crowded along the outer half.

After driving down to the Lakeview parking lot, I found approximately 70 American White Pelicans and 175 Double-crested Cormorants roosting on the jetty. After counting the birds, I began carefully looking through the Double-crested Cormorants, searching for a Neotropic Cormorant. After Iowa's first Neotropic Cormorant was found in 1996 (Dinsmore 1997), I started scanning flocks of double-crests looking for the smaller vagrant species. Closely looking at cormorant flocks regularly produces noticeably smaller individuals, but these have always proven to be small double-crests. So, I did not get too excited when I came across a small cormorant in the middle of the flock. However,

after observing the bird for awhile, and finally getting clear looks at its head, it became clear that the bird was a legitimate Neotropic Cormorant (Figure 1). The bird was about two-thirds the size of the adjacent double-crests, being shorter and less massively built. It seemed to have a proportionally longer and slimmer neck, and the head appeared more streamlined than the double-crests. The tail was similar in length to those of the larger double-crests, and therefore proportionally longer. The Neotropic Cormorant was similar in color to the adult double-crests, being a dark brownish black. The most significant differences, which clinched the identification, were in the structure of the bill. Overall, the bill was shorter and thinner than the bills of the double-crests. At the base of the bill, the area called the gular patch tapered back in



Figure 1. Neotropic Cormorant (on right) with Double-crested Cormorants at Saylorville Reservoir on 19 November 2004. Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

a narrow "V"-shape under the eye. This contrasted with the double-crested gular patches that were wide and rounded or squared off. With a good look, white feathering could be seen bordering the lower edge of the bill base. The bill was orange at the base, shading to

yellow in the middle and then gray at the tip. I was never able to see the bird in flight, but others who did commented that the size difference between the two species was much more apparent than when perched. They also noted that the neck/head of the Neotropic Cormorant was about the same length as the tail, while the head/necks of the double-cresteds were longer than the tails, producing quite different impressions in flight.

I watched the bird from about 10:45–11:05 A.M. During this time it sat quietly, occasionally preening. Other birders were able to see the bird that afternoon as it sat on the jetty or flew out onto the lake to feed. Occasionally it was seen flying over the dam and downstream with other cormorants, but it continued to return to the jetty area Friday evening and all day Saturday. Unfortunately, on Sunday the bird could not be relocated despite a thorough search. Approximately one-hundred Double-crested Cormorants had departed, presumably taking the Neotropic with them.

This bird represents the second record of Neotropic Cormorant for Iowa. Neotropic Cormorant is largely a Mexican and Central American species that, until fairly recently, was restricted to southern Texas and Louisiana, with small numbers in Arizona and New Mexico. This range has been expanding north and has produced an increase in vagrants to the Midwest. Iowa has fewer records than Nebraska, Minnesota, Missouri, or Illinois. Presumably this is due, in part, to a lack of consistently searching for it. This species is most likely to occur from late-April through the end of September with Double-crested Cormorants. This November record is unusually late for the upper Midwest, but it does show that it pays to check cormorant flocks anytime they are present.

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1100 24th St., Apt. 8, Des Moines, IA 50311 (abrees@hotmail.com)

# Three Tanager Species in Mason City

Carolyn Fischer

On 11 May 2005, while watching Baltimore Orioles at my backyard feeder, I noticed another bird that also was eating the oranges. Realizing it was a male Western Tanager, I quickly reached for my camera and took some photographs (Figure 1). A short time later, another bird flew in and joined the Western Tanager. This was a beautiful female Summer Tanager (Figure 2). On 13 May, the expected male Scarlet Tanager came in for some grape jelly.

The Western and Summer Tanagers were last seen on 17 and 18 of May. They provided two new species for my yard list bringing the total to 188.

A record early male Summer Tanager made an appearance on 11 April 2005 in my backyard, which is north of its summer range.

48 Lakeview Court, Mason City, IA 50401-1614 (TFischer2165@aol.com)



Figure 1. Western Tanager, 11 May 2005, Mason City, IA. Photograph by Carolyn Fischer, Mason City, IA.



Figure 2. Summer and Western Tanagers, 11 May 2005, Mason City, IA. Photograph by Carolyn Fischer, Mason City, IA.

# **Black-necked Stilts, Second Fall Record for Iowa**

*Aaron Brees and Jim Sinclair*

On 28 August 2004, we were birding the portion of Red Rock Wildlife Area commonly referred to as “Runnells Wildlife Area” or “the Runnells Overlook” by birders. This area contained several large shallow pools that were losing water and attracting large numbers of shorebirds. We decided to walk the dirt road out to the easternmost pools that seemed to hold the most birds.

While scanning the shorebird flocks in the east pools, we heard loud, repeated “yapping” calls coming from overhead. Looking up, we saw two Black-necked Stilts dropping in from high altitude out of the northwest. The two birds landed among the other shorebirds in the pool and quickly began to feed. Both birds were dark above and white below with extremely long, bubblegum pink legs and thin, dark bills. Both had brown backs, which indicated they were female or immature birds. We watched them until they moved into some shoreline vegetation to sleep. After turning our attention to the other birds for several minutes, we realized that the stilts had disappeared. Apparently the birds had dropped in to briefly rest and refuel, and then had continued on their way. Perhaps they realized that they were the largest and slowest potential targets for the Peregrine Falcon that was stalking the area that day. In any case, we could not relocate them, nor could Jay Gilliam and John Bissell who looked for them a short time afterward.

This record marks the second fall occurrence for Iowa. The first fall record was of two birds on 5 September 1994 at Storm Lake, Buena Vista County (Kent 1995a, b). Our birds were observed in the Marion County portion of the wildlife area. Warren, Polk, and Marion Counties all come together in Red Rock Wildlife Area and, judging by their arrival route, these stilts undoubtedly over flew Polk and Warren Counties in the minutes before we first heard them.

Black-necked Stilts are now regular in Iowa in the spring, and have been expanding north as a breeding species in the Midwest. It seems only a matter of time before stilts nest in Iowa and become more common as a fall migrant.

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1100 24th Street #8, Des Moines, IA 50311 (abrees@hotmail.com)  
810 North B Street, Indianola, IA 50125-1308 (sinclair@aol.com)

# **Starr's Cave Park and Preserve: A Little Gem in Southeast Iowa**

*John Rutenbeck and Charles Fuller*

Although many IOU members have spent time birding in southeastern Iowa, spots such as Lacey-Keosauqua State Park (Van Buren County), Shimek State Forest/Croton Unit (Lee County), and Cone Marsh (Louisa County) have often been the objects of their birding desire.

**Starr's Cave Park and Preserve** (Figure 1) is a lesser known, but very productive, birding hotspot in the southeastern corner of the state. Established in the mid-1970s, it is owned by the state and managed by the Des Moines County Conservation Board. The preserve is a 200-acre area just north of Burlington. Features include an extensive trail system through mature woodlands, prairie remnants, and the limestone bluffs along Flint Creek. Three caves are also located within the preserve. The limestone bluffs in which the caves are located are a favorite place among geologists. The rock is composed mainly of crinoid fossils, a sea animal from the Mississippian Period 300 million years ago. The bluffs are also the home of the internationally known Starr's Cave Rock Formation, a unique oolite limestone first discovered here.

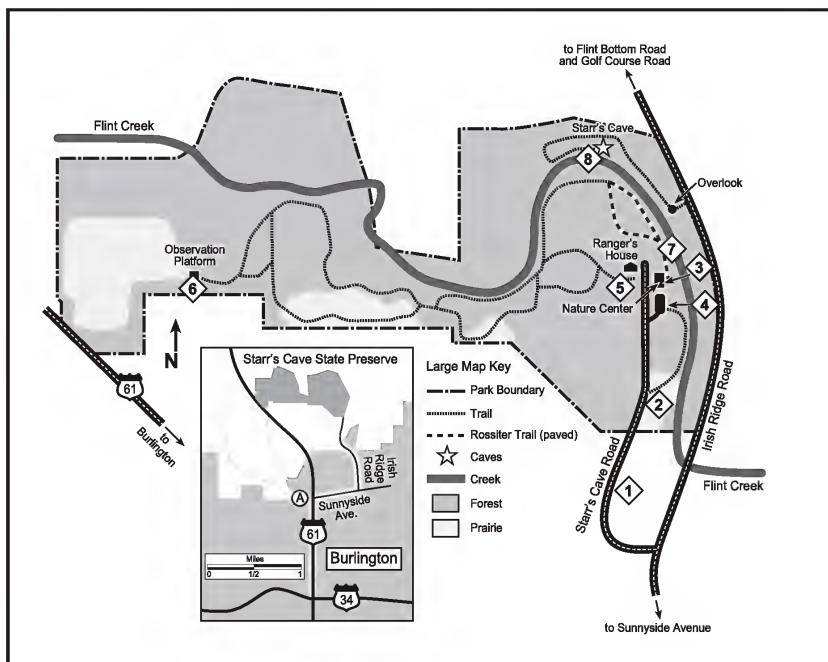


Figure 1. Starr's Cave State Preserve birding areas: (1) Starr's Cave Road, (2) small open meadow, (3) Nature Center building and parking lot, (4) prairie trail, (5) two trails through woods, (6) observation stand, (7) paved walkway along Flint Creek, (8) pedestrian bridge over Flint Creek.

The park has a nature center staffed by two naturalists. They offer diverse programming for schools, scouts, and other special interest groups. In the summer, youths can enroll in a variety of day camps. Starr's Cave staffers greet birders warmly and often stop to ask what is being seen.

Birders can reach Starr's Cave Park and Preserve by turning east onto Sunnyside Avenue from U.S. Highway 61 at the north edge of **Burlington** (Figure 1). Proceed on Sunnyside Avenue for one-half mile and turn north (left) onto Irish Ridge Road. Follow this road past several subdivisions and down the hill to the entrance road into the park.

The entrance road, **Starr's Cave Road** (Figures 1.1 and 2), while technically not a part of the park, is an excellent location for spotting migrating and nesting passerines. Most of the reports of birds seen at Starr's Cave are from this entrance road. Red-eyed and Yellow-throated Vireos nest along the road; Blue-headed, Philadelphia, and occasional White-eyed Vireos are found here during migration. Warbler species seen along the entrance road include three common nesters: American Redstart, Northern Parula, and Common Yellowthroat. Migrating warblers that are usual visitors in the spring and fall include Blackburnian, Canada, Blackpoll, Black-throated Green, Magnolia, Chestnut-sided, Bay-breasted, Blue-winged, Golden-winged, Nashville, Tennessee, Orange-crowned, Ovenbird, Mourning, Wilson's, Black-and-white, and Connecticut. Warblers seen occasionally along the road include Yellow-breasted Chat, Cape May, Worm-eating, and Black-throated Blue. It is not uncommon to have warblers and vireos "dripping" from the trees along the entrance road in spring and fall if the weather conditions are right.

Flycatchers seen along the entrance road or in the park include migrating empids and Olive-sided Flycatcher, as well as nesting Eastern Wood Pewee, Eastern Phoebe, and Great Crested Flycatcher. Baltimore Oriole, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Indigo Bunting, Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Carolina Wren are regularly seen along the entrance road during nesting season as well. Pileated Woodpeckers, while not plentiful, can be found here at any time of the year. Wild Turkeys, which are plentiful, are seen regularly along the road.

Once inside the park, a good birding area is a **small open meadow** (Figure 1.2) along the right side of the road. This field, which is encircled by trees, features plants attractive to butterflies and is used by the naturalists as a wildflower study area. This is a good spot for Eastern Goldfinch, a number of sparrow species, Indigo Bunting, and wrens. A variety of raptors often perch in the trees at the back of this meadow, including all three accipiters and Red-tailed and Broad-winged Hawks.

Beyond the small meadow, trees reappear on both sides of the entrance road. This



*Figure 2. The entrance road to Starr's Cave State Preserve is an excellent birding area during migration and nesting. Photograph by John Rutenbeck, Burlington, IA.*

small treed meadow, which has lots of young saplings, can be excellent during migration for warblers and flycatchers. Both cuckoos have been seen in this area. A Western Tanager was found here several years ago and migrating Summer Tanagers have been seen in this area as well.

Another good birding spot is found at the end of the entrance road near the **Nature Center building and its parking lot** (Figure 1.3). The naturalists maintain a bird feeding station near the building; it can be good for a variety of woodland birds. Nesters here include Yellow-throated Warbler, Baltimore Oriole, Northern Parula, and an occasional Cerulean Warbler. Check the sycamore trees in the area carefully — the nesters love to sing from them. A picnic shelter just east of the Nature Center building provides an annual nesting site for Eastern Phoebe.

A main feature of Starr's Cave Park and Preserve is Flint Creek. It flows in an easterly direction through much of the park, and then turns south near the Nature Center on its way to the Mississippi River about a mile from the park's boundary. As a typical Iowa creek, it can be waded across during dry periods and can be a raging torrent following

spring rains. A variety of birds can be found along the creek during the nesting season, including Wood Ducks, Great Blue Herons, Belted Kingfishers, Barred and Great Horned Owls, and Louisiana Waterthrushes. Bald Eagles can occasionally be found along Flint Creek during the winter.

Located off of the Nature Center parking lot is a sign marking a **prairie trail** (Figure 1.4), which is a recent addition to the park. The trail follows Flint Creek through an area of second growth woodlands and low scrubby bushes and is an excellent place to find migrating warblers in the spring, including Mourning, Wilson's, Canada, and Connecticut.

From a signboard just west of the Nature Center, **two trails** (Figure 1.5) head uphill, taking interested hikers through mature woodlands. Along the way you may see a wide variety of woodland species. Wintering Northern Saw-Whet Owls have been found here in the cedar trees on several occasions. Following the trails west through the woodlands will bring you eventually to a prairie, which is at the westernmost reaches of the park. There is an **observation stand** (Figure 1.6) at this location. Interesting birds found here include a variety of sparrows, American Goldfinches, Northern Harriers, and Red-tailed Hawks.

North of the Nature Center is a woodland meadow featuring a **paved walkway** (Figure 1.7) along Flint Creek. Winter Wrens can be found here in early spring. In summer, this area is good for Carolina Wren, Scarlet Tanager, Yellow-throated Warbler, Northern Parula, and Louisiana Waterthrush. A wide variety of migrating warblers are found here in spring and fall. Rough-winged Swallows



Figure 3. The new Draper pedestrian bridge across Flint Creek leads to Starr's Cave. Photograph by John Rutenbeck, Burlington, IA.

nest in the limestone bluffs across the creek and Broad-winged Hawks roost in the surrounding trees during migration. This is a beautiful area in spring, as it is filled with dozens of flowering redbud trees.

There are three caves in the park; a newly constructed **pedestrian bridge** (Figures 1.8 and 3) takes you high over the creek and to the entrance of Starr's Cave, the park's namesake. Follow the paved walkway north through the woodland meadow to get to this pedestrian bridge. The bridge is reached by following the sidewalk up the hill a short distance. From the bridge there are excellent views of Flint Creek both up- and downstream (Figure 4) and, at thirty feet above the creek, the bridge provides great viewing of surrounding trees.

Starr's Cave Park and Preserve is relatively small; the entire trail system can be easily hiked in about a half day. Birders stroll along the entrance road looking for moving flocks of passerines; one can easily walk the half-mile from one end of the road to the other end in about 30 minutes, allowing for time to search the treetops for passerines.

The Park and Preserve are open 6 A.M. to 10:30 P.M. daily. The Nature Center hours are Monday through Friday 9–3, Sunday 1–4, and by appointment.

What was once a family farm along Flint Creek is now an engaging birding destination. When visiting southeastern Iowa next time, plan to stop in Burlington to visit one of Iowa's little birding gems, Starr's Cave Park and Preserve.

John Rutenbeck, 2912 Lawn Ave., Burlington, IA 52601-1542 (jrutenbeck@mchsi.com)  
Charles Fuller, 420 S. Garfield Ave., Burlington, IA 52601-4145 (CFuller989@aol.com)

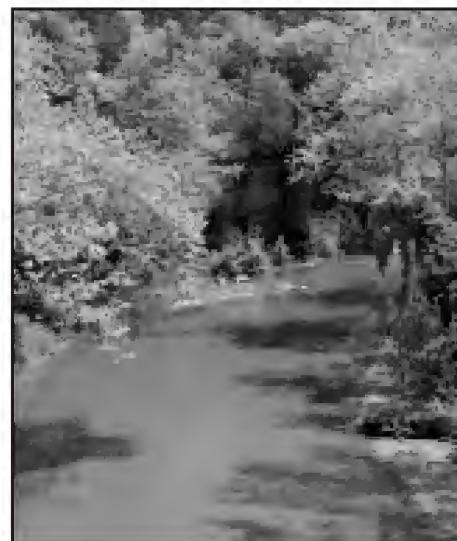


Figure 4. Looking downstream from the Draper Bridge at Flint Creek. Photograph by John Rutenbeck, Burlington, IA.

## Book Review, The Carolina Parakeet

*James J. Dinsmore*

*The Carolina Parakeet: Glimpses of a Vanished Bird* by Noel F. R. Snyder, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2004, 153 pp., 2 color, 35 half-tone ill., \$29.95

The extinction of the Carolina Parakeet in the early 1900s is an ornithological mystery that has received little attention. With this book, Noel Snyder has provided us with a detailed summary of what is known about this species. The only wild parrot known to

have occurred in Iowa, the Carolina Parakeet disappeared from much of its range by the late 1800s and, according to most accounts, was last seen in the wild in 1904.

Snyder, by interviewing several Florida old timers in the 1970s and by digging through the notes of early collectors, has uncovered much new information including considerable evidence that the species survived at least until the late 1920s and perhaps into the late 1930s. He provides as thorough an account of its life history as we are likely ever to have and disputes the classic explanation that its demise was due to shooting, collection of young for the pet trade, or habitat loss. Snyder provides some fascinating evidence suggesting that disease might account for the loss of many of the last remaining populations. He also laments the lack of active conservation work for the species during its last days, largely because one prominent ornithologist thought that it already was extinct. The book doesn't mention Iowa, but does mention a pet Carolina Parakeet kept by former Iowan Paul Bartsch. It is a fascinating account of a sad story for bird conservation in North America.

4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames, IA 50014-3907 (oldcoot@iastate.edu)

## **Fifty Years Ago in Iowa Bird Life**

*James J. Dinsmore*

The September 1955 issue was a fairly thick one, thanks in part to eight black-and-white photographs by Fred Kent and his son, Tom. The lead article described a Big Day in May in the Iowa City region. Author Robert Vane and four others found a total of 125 species, an increase of five over their previous year's total. Among their better finds were a Swainson's Hawk and an American Avocet.

J. Harold Ennis, longtime birder from Mount Vernon, has a fine article on a nesting pair of Pileated Woodpeckers in Jones County. Besides some notes on their nesting behavior, there are several great photographs by Fred Kent of the woodpeckers at the nest hole.

Other articles cover birds of the Dubuque region, notes on a Northern Cardinal nest in Sioux City, and a birding trip to Minnesota and North Dakota. Among the notes is one by William Youngworth on nesting Blue Grosbeaks in northwestern Iowa. He points out that the species is a late migrant, and that it is common to see males singing along roadsides in August, well after most other birds are finished for the season.

4029 Arkansas Dr., Ames, IA 50014-3907 (oldcoot@iastate.edu)

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES** (renewable yearly): Fledgling (students) \$15, Goldfinch \$20, Bluebird \$35, Oriole \$50, Egret \$75, Osprey \$100, Bald Eagle \$250, and Peregrine Falcon \$500+. Additional family members, \$4 per person. Membership dues entitle members to receive *Iowa Bird Life* and *IOU News* quarterly and to vote and hold office in the Union. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Send subscriptions, membership payments, back issue requests, or address changes to David C. Edwards, 2308 State Avenue, Ames, IA 50014 (Dave@dandje.org).

**INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS:** Original manuscripts, notes, letters (indicate if for publication), editorials, and other material relating to birds in Iowa should be sent in Word or WordPerfect to the editor. Research manuscripts will be sent for peer review. Submission of material should be by e-mail attachment or IBM-formatted 3.5" diskette; alternatively, by mail, typed or handwritten.

**Photos and graphics:** Submit photos and slides preferably as TIFF (\*.tif) images or as high resolution JPEG (\*.jpg) images in e-mail attachment or on CD.

Send all materials other than seasonal field reports to Kayleen A. Niyo at Kay@KayNiyo.com or by mail to 25100 Sunset Lane, Evergreen, CO 80439. Deadlines for submission are **January 1 for winter issue (Vol. 1)**, **April 1 for spring issue (2)**, **July 1 for summer issue (3)**, **October 1 for fall issue (4)**. Send seasonal field reports to field reports editors by deadlines listed on inside front cover.

**IOU NEWS:** Paul Hertzel, Editor, 1432 East State Street, Mason City, IA 50401 (phertzel@rconnect.com)

**IOU WEB SITE:** <<http://www.iowabirds.org>>, Ann Johnson, Webmaster. On-line resource for rare bird alerts, checklists, site guides, IOU information and membership. Support the IOU through purchases at the on-line IOU Nature Store.

**CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT:** Deadline for receipt of reports is 15 January. For forms and instructions, contact Christopher J. Caster, 4 South Ridge Ct., Coralville, IA 52241 (cjcaster@earthlink.net).

**IOWA BIRDLINE:** Danny Akers (warbler\_1231@hotmail.com)

**BIRD SIGHTINGS:** Post to ia-bird@lists.iowabirds.org. Subscribe at <<http://www.iowabirds.org/main/list-serve.asp>>

**ADDRESS CHANGES:** Send address changes/membership subscriptions to Registrar David C. Edwards, 2308 State Avenue, Ames, IA 50014 (Dave@dandje.org).

**UPCOMING MEETINGS OF THE IOWA ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION:** Fall 2005: 23–25 September 2005, Lakeside Laboratory, Spirit Lake; Spring 2006: 19–21 May, Clear Lake/Ventura

**FRONT COVER:** King Rail that successfully nested and hatched 8 eggs at the Cumming wetlands, Warren, 19 May 2005 (see article on p. 146). Photograph by Jay Gilliam, Norwalk, IA.

**BACK COVER:** Eastern Bluebird, eastern *Story*, 20 March 2005. Photograph by Carl Kurtz, St. Anthony, IA.

**DESIGN:** Lynn Ekblad, Ames, IA

**GRAPHICS:** Richard Beachler, Boone, IA



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